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THE LETTERS OF THE
CRAIG FAMILY OF SYLLODIOCH,
KIRKCUDBRIGHTSHIRE
1803-1825

Transcribed and introduced by

Peter Didsbury



THE EUROPEAN
ETHNOLOGICAL
RESEARCH CENTRE

*The Letters of the Craig Family of Syllodioch,
Kirkcudbrightshire, 1803-1825*

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Edited by
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PREFACE

My interest in the Craig family of Syllodioch was first aroused when I purchased three of their letters from a dealer in postal history. While researching the content of these, I discovered three others located in Australia. These had been published online by Eunice and Ron Shanahan on their most informative internet site devoted to postal and social history. Yet further enquiry revealed that a collection of eighty-eight documents belonging to the Craigs had been purchased by the Stewartry Museum in Kirkcudbright in 1991. These comprise eighty-six letters, part of an entry from Alexander Craig's journal and a sketch by his eldest daughter Sophia. By kind permission of Dr David Devereux, then curator, I was enabled to transcribe and edit these documents. Those originally in my own collection have now been donated to the Stewartry Museum.

Peter Didsbury
March 2025

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The European Ethnological Research Centre is grateful to Dr Peter Hewitt, Museums Officer, Dumfries and Galloway Council, for supplying photographs of some of the letters from the correspondence and granting permission for them to be reproduced in this volume.

Peter Didsbury would like to thank the following people for their assistance when he was researching the letters: Dr David Devereux, formerly of the Stewartry Museum, Kirkcudbright; Hania Smerecka, Lloyds Bank Group Archive and Museum; Judith Hewitt, Dumfries Museum; Eunice and Ron Shanahan; Dr David Steel, Gatehouse of Fleet; Deborah Walsh, Armit Museum and Library, Ambleside; and Margaret Wright, *Gatehouse Folk* website.

EDITING

The letters have been presented in a standardised format. Headers provide the name of the author and of the recipient and a number by which each letter can be identified. The salutations and valedictions are to a large extent regularised in respect of position and spacing, while the extremely varied way of denoting the date has been made to conform to a single pattern, e.g. '22 May 1814'.

The original spelling has been retained. It is of a good standard throughout the collection and there is little variation between the different correspondents. What might appear to the modern reader to be misspellings were in most cases recognised variants in the early nineteenth century. Examples of these include *ancke* (ankle), *chuse* (choose), *cloaths* (clothes), and *fâvorable* (favourable). It was also common at the time for *any time*, *every where*, *to day* and *with out* to be written as two words rather than one. These words have not been annotated unless their identity is not immediately obvious, in which case the modern form is inserted in [*i.e.*]. The same approach has been taken for the small number of misspelled words. In both cases, [*sic*] has been inserted only when the spelling might be mistaken for a transcribal or typographical error. Missing letters have been inserted in [] only when the meaning of the word would otherwise be unclear.

One or two of the older writers occasionally employed the 'long s', and both Henry Duncan and Alexander Craig sometimes followed the bookish practice of putting a catchword at the foot of the page, to alert the reader to the first word of the following one. In Britain, both of these conventions were falling into disuse in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Their occurrence has not been signified in the transcription.

Regarding punctuation, the dash is ubiquitous in the original letters. It was mostly used along with a full stop, sometimes to mark a new paragraph. These dashes have been omitted from the transcript. In a very small number of places, commas have been silently inserted for clarity or ease of reading. Otherwise, the original punctuation has been retained. It should be noted that many of the correspondents omitted the apostrophe in possessives.

The small superscript letters used by several of the writers have been lowered throughout, often with expansion of the abbreviations in which they are employed. Other abbreviations and contractions have also for the most part been silently expanded. The amount of capitalisation has been reduced.

Where necessary for sense, missing words are supplied in []. Words that have been transcribed with a degree of uncertainty are presented as [?word].

All the above considerations combine to suggest a neater, more regular appearance than the letters possess in reality. Facsimiles of pages by a number of the writers have therefore been provided to counteract such an impression.

FACSIMILES

The letters are folded and sealed after the fashion of the time, the 'flaps' produced by this method sometimes being used for postscripts or extra writing. A number of letters are 'cross-written'. The handwriting varies considerably, as at any period, ranging from the school-taught copybook hand of some of the children's set pieces, to the very 'difficult' cursive of some correspondents, notably those of Aunt Dunlop and Dr Shortt.

1991/28/07

Cum gratia A. M. M. M.
1820

My dear Sophia
I have very much delayed writing you
always expecting you from Ireland but you heard
Mother; this pleasure I have in despair of having written
this may perhaps send to your recollection that
you had a few relatives at the foot of Cumrag
who would be much gratified by a letter from you
remembering them — Grandmother and Annet
Peggy left this ten days since for Dumfries they
mean to visit your Mother's intimate friend Mr.
Dalziel; and on their return are to be with the
McNells in Ruthenburgh a few days and after that
they are to visit at Gylledoch and then depart
thence home it is a very long time since Mother has
been so long absent or as far from home I Mother may
well she will enjoy her own chair at her own bedside

Facsimile 1. The opening page of the letter sent by Dunlop Stewart to Sophia Craig, 4 November 1820.
(Courtesy of Dumfries and Galloway Council)

199|28|10

Ambleside
1 of Dec^r 1820

My dear Papa,

I did not like to miss the opportunity of writing to you by Miss Smith, as she was so kind as to offer to take our letters. I have nothing to say, except that we hope we are getting on with our studies, and are each at the head of a class, and not low in any of

Facsimile 2. The opening page of the letter sent by Lillias Craig to Alexander Craig, 1 December 1820.
(Courtesy of Dumfries and Galloway Council)

1991/28/244

Dumfries

2. of Jan^r 1822.

Dear Sir,

On my arrival here yesterday
I had the pleasure of y^r. letter and its
enclosure, and am exceedingly oblig'd
by you so kindly complying with
my wish as to the form of y^r. remittance,
and also by y^r. early attention.

I thank you for y^r. correction of my
account, in which you are quite right.
The mistake was in the putting Shilling
and Pence, instead of Pounds & Shilling q^r.
I beg my best respects to M^{rs}. Craig,
and remain Y^r. Sir,
Very sincerely Y^r.
J^{ms} Dowling

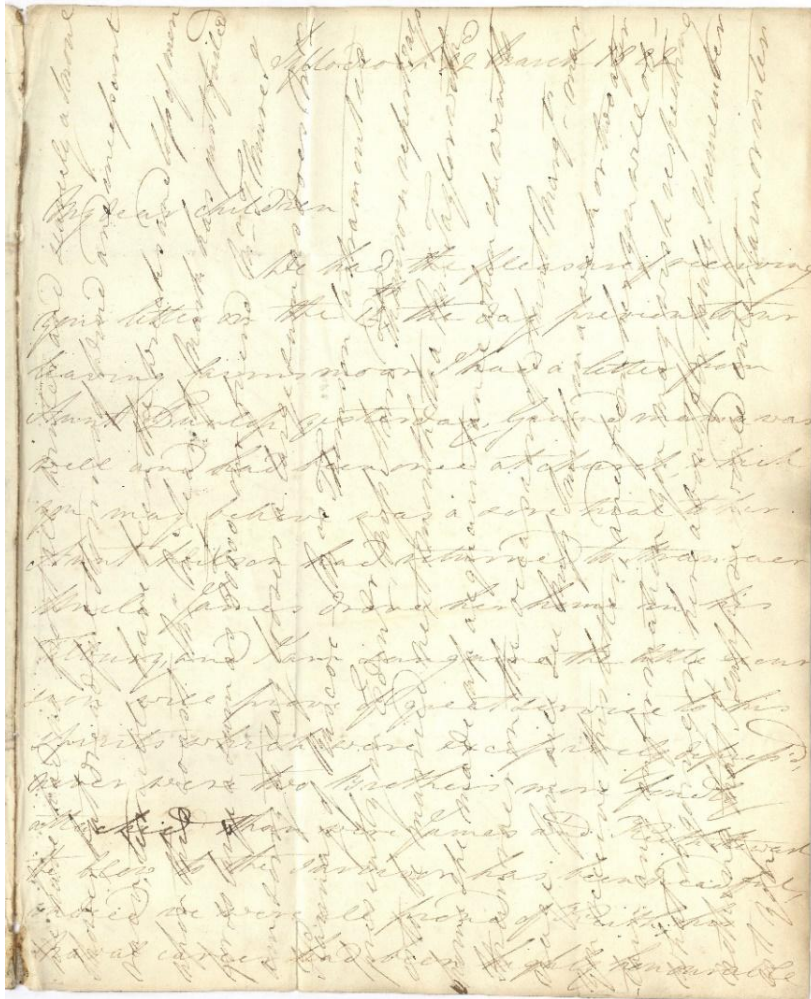
Facsimile 3. The letter sent by Miss Dowling to Alexander Craig, 2 January 1822.
(Courtesy of Dumfries and Galloway Council)

199128/246

Calby 3^d February 1822.

I have to congratulate you My Dear Lillias on your having obtained the prize, and been promoted to a higher class; these distinctions evince diligence & attention on your part and have afforded to your mother & myself a great deal of satisfaction. - You must not however plume yourself on your success, lest you should become arrogant & idle, you must on the contrary redouble your diligence to support the character you have obtained, else it may be alleged that you have been more indebted to the partiality of your teacher than your own merit for the honour that has been conferred on you. - You need not however despair tho' you should be less distinguished in your new class, because many of your competitors are greatly superior to you in years, but you may be always able to acquire, & thoroughly understand all your tasks, & when that is the case, it is not very material what particular station in the class is occupied by you. - You have not made the same proficiency in writing as your

Facsimile 4. The opening page of the letter sent by Alexander Craig to Lillias Craig, 3 February 1822.
(Courtesy of Dumfries and Galloway Council)



Facsimile 5. The opening page of the letter sent by Ann Craig to Sophia and Lillias Craig, 22 March 1822. (Courtesy of Dumfries and Galloway Council)



Facsimile 6. The closing page of the letter sent by Ann Craig to Sophia and Lillias Craig, 22 March 1822. (Courtesy of Dumfries and Galloway Council)

1821/22/41
1822?
Ardblair
20th April

My dearest Anna

We had the pleasure of seeing Miss Smith
on Thursday evening and she was so good as to
offer to take a parcel for us. We had a very plea-
sant walk to Low Wood on Monday last when
we drank tea. I am afraid you will think
my letter very stupid but I have nothing to
tell you. I think I should not know Agnes if
I was to see her we have she reads delightfully
pray tell me if she often talks of us. Our little
gardens look very pretty now for the rain has
brought every thing forward. Miss Smith
says she saw fruit was in full blow at
Manchester I have not another word to say

Facsimile 7. The opening page of the letter sent by Sophia Craig
to Ann Craig, 20 April 1822.
(Courtesy of Dumfries and Galloway Council)

199/28/44
Monday night 10 o'clock

I have very little time my
Dear Sophia. but am unwilling
to let Maryann go with^{out} writing
you. and begging Letters of you. to
write to some of us now & then.
I had a letter from your Ma
a few days ago. and have hopes
of seeing your Papa one of these
days on his way from Edin^{burgh} where
he is at present. it is likely
he may return with Uncle Henry

Facsimile 8. The opening page of the letter sent by Agnes Duncan to Sophia Craig, undated but sent between October 1821 and April 1822. (Courtesy of Dumfries and Galloway Council)

comes in aid of the question of acceptable
 shape I send you some time ago.
 To show the availability of Howard small
 quantities of Brady what ever may be found
 that is in tea powder - soft milk will also
 be useful in some quantities a piece of
 Howard soaked in kerosene liquid of any
 kind & applied to the feet of the Howard will
 also be of use, but the main point is to
 support the strength in a heated state
 & if possible to act on the Bone's joints.
 I will send to you as they have been
 sent to reach the feet of you before
 they. In haste John
 Thomas Shortt.

No 1
 by Rhen Road post: 71
 Magn: alb. — 7/11
 as Curran —
 as poston — 22. 3/9. The Leg
 in Table spoonful every two hours till it
 operates. —

No 2. by And Larkham: Dilute 71
 Amel: Rose Gull 7/11 31
 as poston 3/11/11 M. at
 Colu Amel post. If the table spoonful
 when there is nausea.

Facsimile 9. The closing pages of the letter sent by Dr Thomas Shortt
 to Alexander Craig, 27 January 1825.
 (Courtesy of Dumfries and Galloway Council)

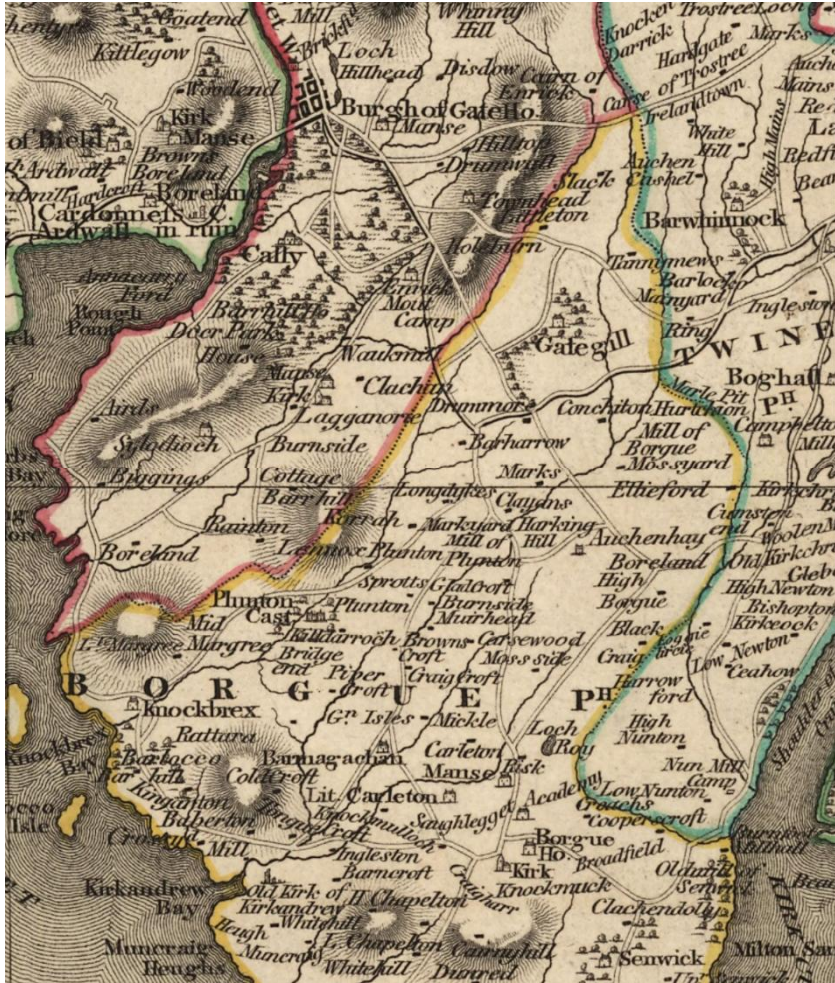
199/28/11

Edinburgh 3 December 1828

My dearest children I would have written to you sooner had I not been almost constantly engaged with company at home for the last month, and knowing you had heard from Aunt Dorothea and Aunt Agnes, and also that our esteemed friend Miss Smith had seen you, I fancied you would not be fretting to hear from me. I am happy to inform you that papa Agnes and myself are quite well. Grandmamma with Aunt Mary left us last week, having taken the opportunity of paying us a visit on their way home from Dumfries where and in its neighbourhood and in Kirkcubright they had been for three weeks, the old Lady and Mary were both uncommonly well, I made your apology for not writing which they readily sustained, and I beg you will with my kind compliments to Miss Forsberg assure her that both with regard

Facsimile 10. The opening page of the letter sent by Ann Craig to Sophia and Lillias Craig, 3 December 1828. (Courtesy of Dumfries and Galloway Council)

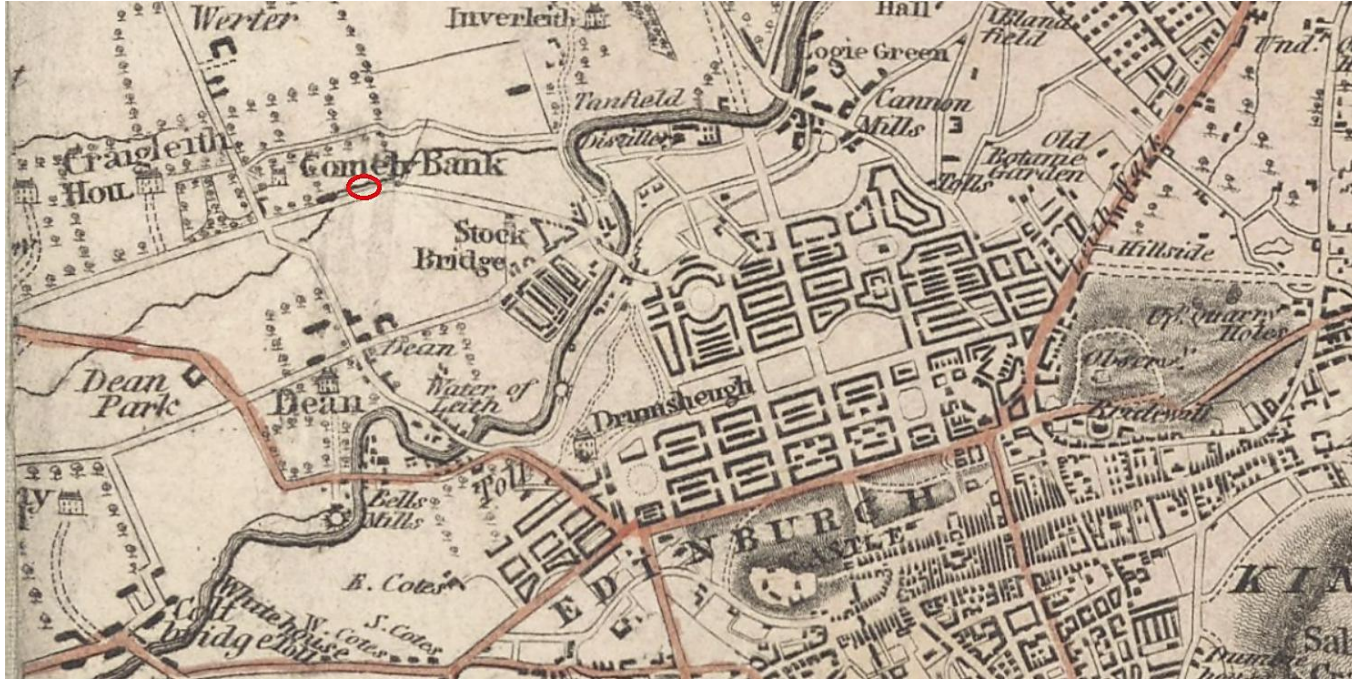
MAPS



Map 1. A detail from John Thomson's *Map of Kirkcudbrightshire* (1821), with a depiction of the house at 'Syldioch'. Other places mentioned in the letters are also shown, including Cally, Gatehouse, and Gategill. (Courtesy of the Trustees of the National Library of Scotland)



Map 2. A detail from Thomas Hodgson and W. R. Gardner's *Plan of the County of Westmorland* (1828), showing Ambleside.
(Courtesy of the Trustees of the National Library of Scotland)



Map 3. A detail from Robert Kirkwood's *A Map of the Environs of Edinburgh* (1817), showing Comely Bank. The location of the Hardys' house, which was built the year after this map was surveyed, has been circled in red. (Courtesy of the Trustees of the National Library of Scotland)

CHRONOLOGICAL SYNOPSIS OF THE LETTERS

1803 to 1818

Four isolated letters, prior to the main sequence, belong to this period. The earliest (Letter 1) shows the Reverend Henry Duncan writing to Alexander Craig alerting him to the imminently expected death of his mother. Reverend Duncan had allowed his predecessor's widow to continue living at the manse. Letter 2 (1812) is from Alexander to his wife, while he is away in Ireland on business connected with Murray's estates there. Letter 3 (1814) is from Ann Craig to her husband while he is on business in London. Letter 4 (1818) is from Ann to her husband while he is away on business in Edinburgh.

July 1820 to Summer 1821

Sophia and Lillias go away to Miss Dowling's school at Ambleside. They remain there over the Christmas period, not returning to Syllodioch until the summer holidays in June or July 1821. Letters from home keep the girls up to date with news of friends and relations, particularly the progress of their younger sister Agnes, who is looking after Lillias' chickens. There are valuable details about the kind of education the girls are receiving. Alexander offers paternal advice about dealing with homesickness and gives a detailed description of his visit to Robert Owen's New Lanark cotton mill. Travel arrangements between Ambleside and Gatehouse are given in detail and are of considerable interest.

August 1821 to June 1822

The girls returned to school in Ambleside probably during the first week in August, apparently escorted there by their father. Once again, they remain in Ambleside over the Christmas period. The tenor and scope of the letters is much as before. Two principal family events are the wedding of the girls' Aunt Margaret Stewart and the death, from diabetes, of their Uncle Keith Stewart. The girls return to Syllodioch for the summer in the middle of June 1822. Their father had been hoping to bring them back by sea, but this plan had to be abandoned. There are further interesting details about coach travel.

August 1822 to June 1823

Sophia and Lillias returned to Ambleside in early August. Sophia writes home excitedly describing their visit to a travelling menagerie. At some point in September, Lillias is taken ill and is brought home to Syllodioch by her father. She apparently never returns to Ambleside. Sophia once again spends the Christmas holidays away from home. By late June, Sophia has gone home for the summer and is apparently unwell. The Dowlings seem to expect both girls to return to Ambleside after the holidays.

July 1823 to 7 December 1823

By the end of July 1823, Lillias is being educated at Comely Bank in Edinburgh, in an establishment set up by two sisters who were among the Craigs' Hardy relations. Sophia has remained at home, increasingly unwell. She is never to resume formal education. She spends part of September and October with her mother and little sister Agnes at the Ruthwell Manse, while her father is travelling. By the middle of November, she and her mother are at Comely Bank, the better to avail themselves of Dr Shortt's medical expertise. Her mother and she leave Edinburgh for home on 7 December.

9 December 1823 to 28 February 1825

Sophia and her mother arrive home on 9 December 1823. Lillias remains at Miss Hardy's school in Edinburgh over the Christmas period. Much of the correspondence during these months concerns Sophia's worsening state of health, including several letters from Dr Shortt. There are also letters to Sophia from Lillias and her cousins in Edinburgh, as well as from Ruthwell. Sophia finally dies at the end of February 1825, the immediate cause of death apparently being whooping cough. Lillias, who is again at home, is ill at the same time.

March 1825

The correspondence ends with letters of condolence from Mary Young, the Reverend George Buchanan, and Mr Smith of Edinburgh. The concluding documents are extracts from Alexander's journal and a sketch done by Sophia.

INTRODUCTION

The correspondence presented here affords an intimate glimpse into the life and concerns of a prosperous family in south-west Scotland in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Alexander Craig lived at Syllodioch, near Gatehouse of Fleet, where he was factor to Alexander Murray III (1789–1845), the proprietor of the local Cally Estate.¹ When Craig was appointed factor in 1801, Alexander Murray was a minor and so it was to his trustees that Craig was at first responsible. As factor, he was energetic on Murray's behalf and played a prominent role in local affairs. His programme of works around Gatehouse and elsewhere is covered in some detail by Russell.² He also farmed and traded on his own account.³ His relationship with Alexander Murray eventually worsened, however, and he was either dismissed or resigned in 1824.

The correspondence, as might be expected, reflects some aspects of his professional work, but many more of them have to do with domestic matters, the education of his and his wife Ann's children, and their relations with neighbours and the social circle within which the family moved. Sad to relate, their eldest daughter Sophia was to die at the age of seventeen, after a protracted and distressing illness; inevitably, therefore, the progress of her disease, its treatment, and relationships with her doctors, are subjects which loom ever larger as the correspondence progresses. Many of these letters still make pitiful and harrowing reading.

Biographical notes

Biographical information about the Craigs and their wider relations, as well as some other persons frequently mentioned in the correspondence, may be consulted below. Information on any individuals not covered here can be found in the footnotes to individual letters.

The Craig family

Alexander Craig was born in 1773 at Kirkpatrick Fleming, Dumfriesshire, where his father, the Reverend John Craig, was minister. His mother was Barbara Orr. Alexander had two sisters: Agnes (b. 1772) and Sophia (1775–1786), after whom Alexander's eldest daughter was named. The family moved to Ruthwell, Dumfriesshire, in 1783 when John Craig became minister there. The latter died in 1798 and his wife Barbara in 1804 (see Letter 1). He was succeeded as minister by the Reverend Henry Duncan, who married Alexander's sister Agnes in 1804. Alexander thus spent much of his youth and adolescence at Ruthwell, where he may have received his early education in a small school run by his father. Little is known about his further education. His obituary states that he 'was designed for the legal profession; but through the

interest of his cousin, the late Alexander Young of Harburn, W.S., he was appointed factor on the estate of the late Alexander Murray of Broughton, Esq., in 1801';⁴ and in papers relating to his dispute with Alexander Murray, he is described as having been, until his appointment as factor, a 'writing clerk' in the offices of Murray's agent in Edinburgh.⁵

There were five children of the Craig/Ravenscroft marriage, of whom Sophia (1808-1825), Barbara Lillias (1810-1883) and Agnes (1816-1896) figure largely in this correspondence. It may be noted that Barbara Lillias was invariably known by her second forename. There had also been two sons, both of whom died in infancy, viz John (1812-1813) and William (1814-1815).

Benjamin Boyd

Benjamin Boyd (1801-1851) was the son of Edward Boyd of Penninghame, near Newton Stewart. He pursued a career as an entrepreneur in Australia, at one point illegally and controversially importing Pacific Islanders (particularly from New Caledonia and the New Hebrides) as indentured servants to work for him on his pastoral properties. His less than ethical dealings with these people, known as blackbirding, were tantamount to slave-trading. He was eventually killed by indigenous inhabitants of the Solomon Islands after going ashore near Guadalcanal.⁶ There is an oil painting of him in the State Library of New South Wales.⁷

Dowling family

Vincent Dowling (1756-1825) was born in County Laois, Ireland, moving to London c.1801. He had a varied career as a barrister, satirist, and parliamentary reporter (he was present at the assassination of Spencer Perceval), also as a bookseller and a vendor of patent medicines. In his later years, he enjoyed an affluent retirement in Kentish Town. Among his several children were four daughters: Ann Dorcas (1784-1837), Mary (1791-1830), Jane Martha (1795-1851) and Eliza (1796-1870). All had been born in Dublin, and all were buried in Grasmere. Ann Dorcas founded her school in Ambleside, Westmorland, after purchasing an existing educational establishment in 1818. She married Dr Thomas Carr, apothecary of Ambleside, in February 1824. She is always referred to as Miss Dowling (later Mrs Carr) in the correspondence, her sister Eliza being styled Miss E. Dowling. All the girls became teachers and eventually assisted in the running of the school at Ambleside.

Duncan relations at Ruthwell

The Reverend Henry Duncan (1774-1846) was the son and grandson of two successive ministers of Lochrutton, Kirkcudbrightshire, both named George. He was ordained in 1799 and became minister at Ruthwell after the death of his predecessor, the Reverend John Craig, who had administered there since 1783. In 1804, Duncan married Craig's daughter Agnes (1776-1832). Henry Duncan

had two older brothers, George and William, as well as a younger one, Thomas Tudor (1776-1858), to whom he was very close. There was also a sister, Christian (b. 1782). Henry's own children were George John Craig (1806-1868), William Wallace (1808-1864) and Barbara Ann (1810-1901). Henry Duncan was a man of many accomplishments and is rightly lauded as the founder of the Savings Bank movement, and as an active philanthropist. He ran a small school of his own at the manse, was a talented geologist and, as an antiquary, was responsible for restoring the Anglo-Saxon Ruthwell Cross.⁸

Hardy relations

The Hardy connection goes back to the marriage in 1780 of Alexander Young's sister Agnes (1755-1812) to the Reverend Thomas Hardy of Charlesfield D.D. (1748-1798). The latter was an eminent divine, Professor of Church History at the University of Edinburgh, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1793, Dean of the Chapel Royal, and Chaplain in Ordinary to the King. There were nine children of the marriage, most of whom were dead or about to die at the time of the correspondence. Of relevance to the present work are the sisters Anne (d. 1857) and Janet (1791-1847), who set up a private school in Comely Bank, Edinburgh; Sophia, who married the surgeon Robert Allan as her second husband; and Thomas (1794-1836), another surgeon, who married Robina Forrester.

Hogg family

There are several references to a Mr or Dr Hogg, who is possibly to be identified as Robert Hogg, a surgeon/dentist of 68 George Street, Edinburgh. Susan Hogg was possibly his daughter, referred to in the letters as 'our dear Susan', and apparently acclaimed for her beauty. The poet and novelist James Hogg ('the Ettrick shepherd') was related to the Duncans and was seemingly a frequent visitor to Ruthwell.⁹

Murray relations

The Murray relations descended from the marriage in 1768 of Susan Orr (see below) to William Murray (1728-1818), the second son of William Murray of Murraythwaite and his wife Elizabeth Dalrymple. Murraythwaite was a house and estate in the parish of Lockerbie, Dumfriesshire. The eldest son of the Murray/Orr marriage was Lieutenant-colonel John Murray of Tundergarth (1775-1822), who was married in 1798 to Catherine Arthington. They were the parents of the two little Murray cousins so often referred to in the correspondence: Susan Catherine (1810-1891) and Catherine Agnes (1811-1899), always referred to in the letters as Susan and Agnes, respectively. Two of their siblings, viz Henry Montague Scott (1803-1844) and John Dalrymple (1800-1863) are also mentioned very briefly.

Orr relations

Many of the relations on Alexander Craig's side of the family were ultimately descended from the Reverend Alexander Orr (c.1650-1810), minister of Beith and then of St Quivox (both in Ayrshire), through his son and namesake the Reverend Alexander Orr of Hazelside (1680-1757), minister of Muirkirk, Ayrshire, and then of Hoddom, Dumfriesshire. Four of their children are of interest here: Alexander Orr of Waterside (1725-1774), Agnes (1722-1809), Barbara (1723-1804) and Susan (dates unknown). Agnes married William Young, the minister of Hutton and Corrie, Dumfriesshire; Barbara married John Craig, the minister of Ruthwell; and Susan married William Murray. Barbara was the mother of Alexander Craig and his sister Agnes, and thus the paternal grandmother of the three Syllodioch girls, Sophia, Lillias and Agnes. Alexander of Waterside had various issue including Elizabeth (1762-1829), who married a John Balfour, and Agnes (1769-1846) and Louisa (1769-1826), who both died unmarried. All three sisters are mentioned in the correspondence: Elizabeth as 'Mrs Balfour', and Agnes and Louisa as 'the Miss Orrs'. See further the entries for the Murray and Young families.

Ravenscroft relations

Dr John Ravenscroft was an American, born in Virginia c.1750. He studied medicine at Edinburgh University and then returned to Virginia, where he married Lillias Miller. Their first child was John Stark Ravenscroft (1772-1830), after whose birth the family moved to England and then (c.1773) to Scotland, where Dr Ravenscroft bought the estate of Cairnsmore, in the parish of Kirkmabreck, Kirkcudbrightshire. Two sons (George and Peyton), who both died young, were followed by two daughters, Jane (1778-1848) and Ann (1778-1844). 'Aunt Jane' married an elderly banker, William McKeand (1743-1826) of Challoch, near Newton Stewart. They had no children. Ann married Alexander Craig in 1808. Dr Ravenscroft died intestate in 1781, apparently in his early thirties. See further the entry for the Stewart relations.

Thomas Shortt

Thomas Shortt (1788-1843), who was responsible for Sophia Craig's medical care throughout her long illness, was married to Henrietta Young (1796-1839), the eldest daughter of Alexander Young of Harburn. Their children, briefly mentioned in the correspondence, were Francis Henry (b. 1822) and Sophia (b. 1823). When we first hear of the Shortts, they are on their way back from St Helena, where Thomas had been Principal Medical Officer (Letter 24). Shortt had been educated for the medical profession at Edinburgh and was appointed hospital surgeon to a regiment of the Foot Guards at age eighteen. A military career followed with service in Egypt, Sicily and the Italian peninsula. His rise through the profession was rapid, and by the end of hostilities in 1815, aged twenty-seven, he had been appointed Physician to the Forces. He was then

placed on half-pay and began a private practice in Edinburgh, graduating M.D. with a thesis entitled 'De Febre Endemica'. He was recalled to service in 1816, when an epidemic fever broke out in Gibraltar; and in 1819 was made Physician Extraordinary to the King in Scotland. In 1820, he was recalled for a second time and assigned to St Helena. Various public appointments followed his return to Edinburgh, where he lectured on medicine at the university.¹⁰

Smith family

Members of the Smith family are mentioned frequently in the correspondence. Despite this, they at first proved difficult to trace with absolute certainty. The evidence of the letters is first summarised below and then followed by a suggestion of probable identity. Some additional details may be found in the endnotes.

The Smith family appears to have been based locally, in Gatehouse. It is always referred to in the letters as *Mr Smith's family* (my italics), so he may have been a widower. There seem to have been at least two daughters, since Letter 25 refers to 'two of the Miss Smiths' and Letter 42 to 'none of the Miss Smiths'. There are references to a Miss Catherine Smith and a Miss Margaret Smith (Letters 6 & 28, respectively). There may also be a cousin Cathrine (*sic*) from Dumfries (Letter 9). Definitely of the same family was a brother to the girls, Dr Francis or Frank Smith.

The Smiths were evidently held in some esteem by the Craigs and may have had connections with the Birtwhistle family, who were prominent in the early history of Gatehouse.¹¹ The member referred to most frequently is simply 'Miss Smith', who was possibly, following contemporary usage, the eldest daughter. The family seem to have had connections with both Ambleside and Yorkshire, and Miss Smith is seen to be constantly travelling between them, on her way visiting Sophia and Lillias Craig at Miss Dowling's and taking letters from them back to Gatehouse.

A grave monument in St Michael's churchyard, Dumfries, records the death at Gatehouse on 28 June 1825 of a John Smith, aged seventy-five, and his daughter Jane. He is described as a writer, of Kirkcudbright, and Jane is said to have died at Corbely, Dumfriesshire.¹² Also possibly of relevance is a notice in *The Carlisle Patriot* of the death at Gatehouse on the 12 April 1819 of 'Mrs Smith, wife of John Smith Esq.'.¹³ A John Smith and Marion Lockhart appear in the parish records of Kirkcudbright, along with their several children, including Catherine (b. 20 March 1780), Jane or Jean (possibly birth and baptism records for the same child, on 22 February 1784 and 4 March 1784) and Margaret (b. 16 June 1786).¹⁴ Confirmation that this family actually lived in Gatehouse is provided, on the one hand, by incidental detail in a judgment regarding an inheritance dispute, given in the House of Lords on 9 June 1818, in which it is recorded that Marion Lockhart, the daughter of Mrs Jean Mure of Livingstone, was the 'spouse of John Smith, residing at Gatehouse of Fleet';¹⁵

and, on the other hand, by the deeds for 47 High Street, Gatehouse, which mention that the property was at one point occupied by the 'heirs of John Smith Esquire, deceased'.¹⁶

Stewart relations

Patrick Stewart (1734-1814) of Kirkcowan, Wigtownshire, had four children by his first wife Helen Dunlop (d. 1785): Peter (1781-1808), Margaret (1783-1845), Harriet (1784-1872) and Dunlop (1785-1871). Peter, a captain in the Royal Navy, died unmarried; Margaret married the Reverend David Wilson of Stranraer in 1821; Harriet married (in 1814) John McKerlie R.N., who was ranked rear-admiral when he died in 1845;¹⁷ and Dunlop was a spinster, who by the time of the correspondence was living at Cairnsmore.

In 1788, after his first wife's death, Patrick Stewart married Dr John Ravenscroft's widow, Lillias Miller/Ravenscroft, by whom he had three more children: James (1791-1877), Keith (1792-1822) and Stair (who died young and is not mentioned in the correspondence). After the death of Dr Ravenscroft, the Cairnsmore estate passed first to his son John Stark Ravenscroft and then by purchase to Patrick Stewart and subsequently by inheritance to his son James Stewart.¹⁸ The latter was evidently a much-loved uncle of the Craig girls.

Young relations

Alexander Young of Harburn (1757-1842) was the son of the Reverend William Young (1710-1761), the minister of Hutton and Corrie, and his wife Agnes Orr (see above). Alexander was a Writer to the Signet and factor to the duke of Hamilton, a position of considerable importance. He built his house at Harburn, West Lothian, in 1804. He was married to Sophia Bell (c.1770-1847), who was from Guernsey. The couple had a son, William (later William Young-Herries of Spottes), and six daughters: Henrietta, Elizabeth, Anne Dashwood, Mary, Sophia and Georgina. Of these, two deserve particular mention here: Henrietta (1796-1839), who married Thomas Shortt, Sophia's doctor; and Mary (1790-1842), who is undoubtedly the 'Miss Young [...] a relation to whom we are strongly attached' of Letter 41, since she was the oldest of the unmarried daughters at the time. Mary is the only one from whom there is correspondence, though several members of the family are mentioned in the letters. These are indicated in the footnotes to the letters where appropriate.

Discussion: selected aspects of the content

In *Pigot & Co.'s New Commercial Directory of Scotland for 1825-26*, Alexander Craig Esq. is listed among the 'Resident Gentry' of Gatehouse of Fleet. 'Gentry', although rather a fluid term, remains useful when thinking about the social milieu to which he and his family belonged, avoiding as it does misleading modern 'class' definitions. A majority of those so designated in the *Directory* appear to be substantial landowners, though the group also includes

military and naval officers, the clergy and the minor nobility. Alexander merited inclusion, not by being a landowner in his own right, but probably in virtue of his position as factor to what was reputed to be the largest estate in Scotland not in noble ownership,¹⁹ as well as his wider standing in local affairs. Other family members also appear under this head, e.g. Uncle James Stewart of Cairnsmore, and many of the social interactions which are mentioned in the letters – visits, news, gossip etc. – concern those of similar standing. It is also interesting to note the family's access to what might be termed 'cultural networks'. Alexander was able to visit the social reformer Robert Owen, a visit possibly facilitated by his Ruthwell or Harburn connections (Letter 10). The playwright and poet Joanna Baillie paid a visit both to the Cairnsmoor and to the Ruthwell relatives while touring the area 'in search of wild scenery', before going to stay with Sir Walter Scott (Letter 11). Russell describes Ruthwell in Duncan's time as an 'academic Mecca' of the Enlightenment and lists some of the eminent persons whom Alexander could have met there, including Thomas Carlyle and James Hogg, as well as assorted geologists, politicians and divines.²⁰

It is interesting to note how many of the Craigs' relations spring ultimately from clerical stock: the Youngs, Orrs, Hardys, and Duncans, as well as the Craigs themselves, are children and grandchildren 'of the manse'. The clergy had played a large part in creating the advanced educational system which was well established in Scotland by the time of the correspondence. An Act for Settling of Schools, passed by the Scottish Parliament in 1696, had obliged the Church of Scotland to set up a parochial school in each parish; and ministers sometimes ran their own private schools in addition, as did the Reverend Henry Duncan and, apparently, Alexander's father, the Reverend John Craig. There was also a variety of private schools available in the burghs. The sons of clerical families were thus well equipped to go on to a university and to become eminent themselves in the Church, or in the medical or legal profession. Alexander Young of Harburn exemplifies this: as noted above, he had become a Writer to the Signet and factor to the vastly wealthy duke of Hamilton, a position of some considerable importance. Young was evidently held in some esteem as a senior member within the family and it should be noted that Ann Craig asks her husband 'to beg [her] best respects to Mr Young's family *if you think proper*' (Letter 4, my italics). Some years later, she describes herself to her husband as being 'very heartbroken' to report that Young does not appear to be perfectly satisfied with him (Letter 85).

Alexander's aforementioned work as factor on Murray's behalf included the re-routing of various roads in the area, bridge construction, the building of a new lock-up for Gatehouse, and the canalisation of the lower River Fleet. In all this, as well as in his involvement with up-to-date agricultural practices (Letters 2 & 3),²¹ he can be seen as an 'improver' typical of the Enlightenment period. In 1814, he followed the example of his brother-in-law Henry Duncan and was instrumental in setting up the Gatehouse of Fleet Bank of Savings Friendly

Society, of which he became governor. A keen interest in education and social reform is also glimpsed in the correspondence: witness the description for his daughters' benefit of a visit to Robert Owen and his cotton mills at Lanark (Letter 10).

In the domestic sphere, the letters reveal Alexander as obviously a very loving father. He is, perhaps, given to somewhat earnest 'prosing' about the *maladie du pays* (Letter 8) or the very precise angle at which the pen should be held when writing (Letter 28), but he is also carefully attentive to his daughters' interests: just like his wife, he provides regular bulletins on the health and welfare of their chickens (e.g. Letter 28).

We are fortunate in having testimony to Alexander's character from other sources. He was clearly very vigorous. John M'Diarmid related how Alexander, when visiting Loch Grannoch in his capacity of factor, heard complaints from the local farmers about a brace of eagles which had bred on a small island in the loch and were preying on their kids and lambs.²² He promptly stripped and swam to the island, found the nest and in the absence of the birds carried off its single large egg which he ever afterwards kept upon his mantelpiece. He likewise received mention, this time in respect of his generosity, from Thomas Murray, author of *The Literary History of Galloway* (1822). Murray recorded how he received encouragement and much needed financial assistance from Alexander when, as a young and very impoverished student, he was about to go up to the University of Edinburgh. He said that Alexander's 'kindness was as warm as it was unostentatious' and described him as 'ever since my most intimate and affectionate friend and acquaintance'.²³

Turning to Ann Craig, it seems almost superfluous to notice her as a loving mother. Examples of her affections in this regard are met with at every turn in her letters to her 'dearest children' and scarcely need elaborating. There are worries, of course. She is troubled by five-year-old Agnes' disruptive and wayward nature (Letters 9 & 25) and confides her concerns to the older girls: Agnes, she says, 'is a poor lonely little creature that I am often sorry for' and describes her as 'a rough article, and very inattentive' (Letters 33 & 41). It may be noted that her parents' attitude to some of this behaviour seems surprisingly modern: Agnes positively refuses to go to church, and this is apparently tolerated (Letter 28).

Some of Ann's worries, though, are very much of the time. It is difficult to overestimate the fear which could at that time be caused by the occurrence of disease in a neighbourhood. In 1818, she debates the wisdom of letting her daughters accept a social invitation because of a local outbreak of smallpox (Letter 4); and three years later she reports on the possibility of another outbreak: 'I have not heard of typhus fever in our immediate neighbourhood but the small pox rages at Gatehouse and I fear the fever will not subside without paying us a visit when within eight miles of us' (Letter 23). As Amanda Vickery remarked, 'sick children and the sinister stirrings of infection' in a locality were common

themes of women's diaries and letters.²⁴ Ann makes little mention of her own health, though she does appear to have been a martyr to the toothache (Letters 16 & 51).

Ann appears as a capable household manager, as well as one able to cope with some of her husband's business affairs during his absences. There are hints, however, of some deep-seated insecurities. Writing to Alexander about one of his trading ventures on Murray's behalf, she confides: 'I am always anxious where you have any concern lest your judgement in purchasing should be called into question' (Letter 4), and this is immediately followed by a telling paragraph:

I have endeavoured to cast all care respecting our future destination as far from me as I possibly can, trusting that when my girls grow up there may be a way forward for their escape from the thousand unpleasant things that I have encountered these last 18 years, and for myself I can continue my old straight forward jog tho' I am not sanguine enough to hope ever to succeed so as to become feelless.

This was written in 1818, Ann having married in 1808. Without further evidence, it is impossible to know of what the 'thousand unpleasant things' consisted, though they must surely have included the death of her two firstborn children, both sons, as infants in 1813 and 1815. There was further loss to come. The latter half of the correspondence (Letters 46 onwards) is increasingly dominated by Sophia's illness and its treatment, with all its attendant vicissitudes and gradual loss of hope.

The main body of the correspondence opens in happier times, with the departure of the two eldest Craig daughters for school in England (Letter 5). In a vignette worthy of a Russian novel, Ann depicts herself sitting watching the vessel carrying her husband and girls as it sets off down the Fleet for Whitehaven, Cumberland:

When we parted I walked to the bathing house where I was joined by Dr Kennedy and we sat upon the rocks till darkness hid the sloop from our view. I saw you all upon deck and waved my handkerchief but your papa says none of you observed me.

Lillias was just under ten years of age and Sophia a little over eleven and a half, and they were going away for the first time. They would not have had any education outside the home prior to this and had evidently been taught to read by their mother (Letter 10). There are several references to Ann embarking upon the same process with Agnes (Letters 10, 19, 24-25 & 28), possibly using similar tools. Maria Edgeworth's tales for children were used as a primer, the author's purpose being to present moral precepts in dramatically interesting form.²⁵ Agnes, aged four and a half, was apparently delighted by them.

The school to which they were sent was in Ambleside, run by the aforementioned Miss Ann Dorcas Dowling. Miss Dowling was a friend of Sara Hutchinson, the poet William Wordsworth's sister-in-law, who described her as 'a most admirable woman & very accomplished in the solid sense of the word'.²⁶ The Wordsworths were living locally at the time, at Rydal Mount. Miss Dowling had worked for Lord Galway as a governess in 1809-1811 and then for various genteel families around Penrith, including that of the Reverend Henry Askew, rector of Greystoke. She had first met Wordsworth in the Galway household in 1812. Ambleside had its own school for young ladies, run by a Miss Fletcher. Wordsworth's daughter Dora was a pupil there, but he was far from pleased by her lack of progress. An overriding concern was that Miss Fletcher was profoundly deaf, making communication with her difficult. Eventually, in 1818, the establishment was taken over by Miss Dowling, who admitted her first pupils in July of that year. She ran the school on the Madras or Lancasterian System and is said to have rapidly achieved excellent results.²⁷

An idea of the establishment and what it offered may be gained from a prospectus Miss Dowling placed in the local press.²⁸ She states that, having finished the education of her noble pupils, she has been incited to open a boarding school for young ladies in Ambleside. She aims to gain the attention and esteem of her 'parlour boarders' by 'affectionate treatment and a constant eye to their manners, deportment, and comforts, as well as to their religious improvement, firmly convinced that accomplishments are of no value, if not founded upon this early solid base'. The school is delightfully situated near the church and 'convenient to excellent medical advice'. She has been accustomed to conversing in French from a very early age, has spent much time in Paris, and intends French to be the 'general language' of the school (though there is no evidence of this in the letters). Holidays were to be six weeks at Midsummer and four weeks at Christmas.

The fees are of some interest. For girls over ten years it was fifty guineas (*i.e.* £52.50)²⁹ per annum for board and the general syllabus. Residence in the holidays was charged at an extra one guinea per week. The basic curriculum consisted of French, English, history, chronology, use of the globes and needlework. Tuition in extra subjects and accomplishments could be offered at additional expense: Italian, drawing, piano, and harp each cost six guineas while dancing was four guineas. All of these were subject, in addition, to an 'entrance fee' of two guineas. Sophia's request in Letter 36 for permission to undertake 'a pretty kind of pencil drawing' is thus explained: it would have cost her father an extra eight guineas. Strangely, writing and arithmetic are both stated as 'extras' at two guineas each. Washing was three guineas and there appears to have been a charge of one guinea to cover use of the library.

These figures allow us to calculate the minimum expenditure on the girls' education: assuming that both of them were learning the piano (Letter 19), without any other 'extras', the fees would have amounted to sixty-two guineas

each per annum, a not inconsiderable sum. It could well have been more than this; given the 'copybook' hand of some of the letters (8, 10, 12 & 23), it may be supposed that 'writing' was being formally taught. Arithmetic, too, seems unlikely to have been ignored. To this expenditure of over £130 per annum must be added pocket money, travel, medical expenses, the cost of holiday residence, and the double cost for books (Letter 13). Two half-yearly bills survive in the correspondence, giving the charges for the second half of 1822 (Letter 39) and the first half of 1823 (Letter 44). The total charges, including Carr's medical fees, amounted to £114 19s 8d. The charges in Letter 71 appear to reflect the fact that Lillias had been removed from the school for part of that term.

Miss Fletcher had been aided by at least two other teachers.³⁰ In June 1820, Miss Dowling announced that one of her sisters would be joining the establishment. This was Eliza, who was to take over the school when Ann Dowling died in 1830.³¹ Ultimately all four sisters would become teachers at the school; indeed, Dora Wordsworth herself returned to teach there when two of the sisters were away in Paris early in 1824. It should be noted that letters from the school are always simply signed 'Dowling', without an initial (though 'Miss Dowling' and 'Miss E. Dowling' are always carefully distinguished in the Craigs' own letters). Miss Ann Dowling was a semi-invalid (Letters 22-24 & 33), so it may be that Eliza was undertaking some of the correspondence on her behalf.

There are several indications in the letters of the importance Miss Dowling attached to providing a rounded education and the development of her pupils' social manners. In Letter 10, Alexander Craig expresses to Lillias his appreciation of Miss Dowling's 'letting you see the romantic scenery around Ambleside' and there were other outings. Sophia reports excitedly on their visit to a 'wild beast show' and mentions that there are so many pupils now that Miss Dowling has to split them into smaller groups for excursions (Letter 36). This is borne out by a letter of Sara Hutchinson in September 1821. She reported that a fourth Dowling sister was about to join the establishment and that they now had as many boarders as ever: they were hoping to have thirty boarders and ten day scholars, though they hoped that the number of the latter would decrease.³²

Opportunities for the pupils' 'social' development were not neglected. In December 1821, the girls are excited to attend a masked ball, probably the one held to mark Dora Wordsworth's leaving Miss Dowling's school (Letter 27, Note 144). In September 1822, Sophia writes home to say that she and Lillias and the Murray cousins are going to Colonel and Mrs Campbell's for dinner the next day (Letter 36). Sophia spent Christmas 1822 with the Campbells, and Mary Young was pleased to pass on to Ann Craig the very favourable reports she had received from Mrs Campbell about her daughter (Letter 41). It may be noted that, at a slightly later date than the present correspondence, Dorothy Wordsworth's Rydal Notebooks have numerous references to visits from the Carrs and Dowlings, accompanied by their pupils, often for tea. On 21 May 1825, for example, there is the entry, 'Miss Eliza Dowling & 6 young Ladies'.³³

As noted in the chronological synopsis below, Lillias left Ambleside in September 1822 and was not to return. Sophia had continued there but by Midsummer 1823 was increasingly ill and never resumed formal education. After the best part of a year at home in Syllodioch, Lillias was sent to be schooled in Edinburgh, at 21 Comely Bank, an establishment run by two of the Craigs' Hardy relations. No particular reason for the change is known; it might have resulted simply from the desire to patronise a family concern. The Murray cousins, Agnes and Susan, were also boarders and possible other pupils include a Miss Syme and a Barbara (Allan?). It may have been a small and quite short-lived establishment. The only occurrence of a Miss Ann Hardy at 21 Comely Bank in the *Edinburgh General Post Office Directory* is for 1825-1826, and there is no indication of a school there. In this respect, it is worth noting that 21 Comely Bank was lived in by Thomas and Jane Carlyle in 1826-1828. The house is now on a busy road in a populous suburb of Edinburgh, but in the 1820s, it was peacefully located well away from the hustle and bustle of the city:

Our situation here at Comley [*sic*] Bank continues to be unexceptionable, nay, in many points truly enviable. [...] Thus pass our days in our trim little cottage, far from all the uproar, and putrescence (material and spiritual) of the reeky town, the sound of which we hear not, and only see over the knowe the reflection of its gas-lights against the dusky sky, and bless ourselves that we have neither part nor lot in the matter.³⁴

There is little detail in the correspondence about the curriculum at Comely Bank, though the establishment probably resembled Miss Dowling's Academy in its aspirations. Geography and Italian were taught, and there were music lessons with Miss Elouis, a peripatetic teacher (Letters 45C, 72 & 88A). Away from the classroom, the girls visited Comely Gardens (Letter 45A), made an excursion by steam packet to Aberdour in Fife (Letter 83), and on one occasion clubbed together to hire a coach for an outing (Letter 88A). Perhaps most interestingly, the letters allow us refreshing glimpses into the daily lives of these young girls: supposedly studying, they interrupt and tease each other mercilessly (Letter 45C); they articulate their adolescent femininity with jokes about curl papers (Letter 45B); they are enjoying a lie-in when they realise they have forgotten that the music teacher is due (Letter 88A).

With the girls being educated away from home, it is natural that travel arrangements are a common topic in these letters. The girls' first removal to Ambleside started with a voyage to Whitehaven, whence they would have travelled overland to the school. They were accompanied by their father, who reports that they coped with sea-sickness better than he had expected. Sea travel was often to be preferred to journeys by road, which could be very difficult in this region. When Alexander had to bring Lillias back home from Ambleside in October 1822, he swore he would never again attempt the Keswick to Wigton road; it was 'wretched in the extreme' and the route over the Kirkstone pass,

though longer, could be accomplished in a shorter time (Letter 37). It is interesting to note that in this letter, we have a record of the crossing of the Solway Firth at low tide between Bowness on the English shore and Seafield, south of Annan.

Wind and tides being favourable, though, the sea route between Cumberland and Galloway was the more convenient. Alexander might expect to leave Whitehaven on the evening of one day and be home around twenty-four hours later (Letter 7). On one occasion he was dropped at Balmangan and thought nothing of walking the last nine miles home (Letter 5). Sea travel could not always be arranged, however: in summer 1822 Alexander had been hoping to bring the girls home by sea but in the event, he was unable to procure the wherry by which they had travelled the previous year because it was undergoing repairs (Letters 33, 34 & 35).

Preparations for holiday travel had to be discussed well in advance. In May 1821, planning for the start of the summer vacation in July was already under way (Letter 21). If Reverend Duncan was coming to Ambleside to pick up the Murray cousins, perhaps they could all pack into one chaise together and get home in twenty-four hours? Or perhaps they could hire a chaise with any other pupils who might be travelling north? These options failing, they would have to get to Carlisle or Penrith by one of the public coaches, then spend twenty-four hours in an inn waiting for the Dumfries coach, which, as Alexander remarks, would not be pleasant. There are similar discussions in 1822 (Letters 33 & 35). Everything will have to be arranged to fit in with Papa's business. This time Reverend Duncan had mooted the possibility of bringing the Murray girls (and by implication the Craig daughters) back part of the way by steam-packet but Ann had not liked the thought of the long road journey which this would also involve. In the end, Papa cannot get a boat and once again advises them that they will have to make their way to Carlisle as best they can, spend the night there, and come on by the Carlisle-Dumfries Mail the next day. There are detailed instructions about taking out their ticket and of how much to tip the coachman, guards and chambermaids on the journey. We may shudder today at the thought of dispatching two young teenaged girls in this fashion, but it does not seem to have been extraordinary: when the nine-year old Dora Wordsworth was sent away to school it was as an outside passenger on a coach, seated aloft in the company of two drunken sailors.³⁵

From the late summer of 1823, the correspondence is increasingly dominated by Sophia's illness and its treatment. It seems to have had its onset during the holidays and quickly to have become serious enough to prevent her from resuming her schooling. The earliest description of her symptoms comes at the end of August (Letter 46). They consist principally of extreme fatigue and loss of appetite, the latter perhaps better described as a growing disinclination or reluctance to eat much at all. Subsequent letters make frequent reference to headaches and sensations of cold or heaviness in the stomach. One of the

Gatehouse surgeons was called out on this occasion, and it would appear that Sophia was already under his care.

No attempt to diagnose Sophia's illness can be attempted here, other than to note that some of the evidence would be consistent with it having been an eating disorder; however this might be, the letters offer a promising body of material for a future professional case-study, both of the illness and its treatment. Some general observations about her treatment are offered below.

It is important to note that in the first quarter of the nineteenth century medical science was barely on the cusp of the main developments which would characterise modern medical understanding. Although mediaeval theories of the body's four humours had long been discarded, therapeutic practice could still be remarkably similar. Symptoms might be taken to indicate the constitution's departure from a 'normal' state of balance, to be restored by recourse to pharmaceutical means or by the so-called 'heroic' methods; the latter included the use of purgatives and emetics, the application of blisters, and bleeding. It will be seen that Sophia was subjected to a variety of drugs in conjunction with dietary recommendations, as well as to constant purgation. Blisters, poultices and the application of leeches were also considered (Letters 48A, 73 & 76). She was not to be bled (Letter 64), though this did happen to Lillias on one occasion, when Dr Melville took three cupfuls from her arm (Letter 37).

Sophia's principal doctor from around August 1823 onwards was Thomas Shortt, an eminent medical man recently returned from St Helena. As noted above, he was married to one of the daughters of Alexander Young of Harburn and was thus a member of the wider family. From the outset, Shortt was of the opinion that there was no organic disease involved, and prescribed treatments aimed at restoring Sophia's strength and 'delivering the blood to its proper channels' (Letter 47). He was conducting his diagnosis at a distance, relying on Alexander for a description of his daughter's symptoms. At the same time, he took care to obtain a second opinion initially from Dr John Thomson, an Edinburgh colleague, and then from other doctors. Thomson thought that the 'present derangements in [her] constitution' proceeded from a delayed onset of menstruation and that little improvement could be expected until this change had taken place. Shortt seems tacitly to agree with this view, as well as with Thomson's detailed recommendations as to diet and medicines, both aimed at supporting Sophia's general health and encouraging 'a flow of blood to the uterine system' (Letters 48A). This was at the end of August 1823. A few weeks later, it may be noted, Shortt appears to hold the opposite opinion, and thinks that the delay in menstruation is a result, not the cause, of her 'present state of health' (Letter 63, early December 1823).

Sophia and her mother were in Edinburgh from some time before 18 November 1823 until 6 December 1823. They stayed at the Hardy establishment at 21 Comely Bank. Shortt was thus able to attend his patient in person during that period, rather than giving his opinion by letter. He seems to

have decided a little before this that Sophia's symptoms were of a 'nervous' nature (Letter 54, 30 October 1823) and to have continued in this view.

Ann Craig's letters from this period reveal increasing frustration and tensions. She notes in Letter 57A that Sophia was very depressed, could hardly walk and was being purged each night, despite the fact that she was only taking small amounts of liquid 'food' each day: soup, milk, cocoa and wine. Ann admits that Shortt is attentive and caring but cannot find any grounds for his or Dr Hamilton's optimism. She does not feel able to challenge them, though, writing that her ignorance makes her timid. It should perhaps be noted that, on the very same day, Shortt tells Alexander that Sophia is 'decidedly improving in health' and seems to suggest that Mrs Craig agrees with him (Letter 58). Shortt tells Alexander that he finds Sophia unmanageable in her reluctance to take anything that might do her some good.

The extent of Ann's worries and frustrations is starkly revealed one day later. Shortt is continually trying to get her to agree that there are signs of improvement, but she cannot in conscience do so. And her patience has its limits:

how purging a poor creature every second day may in the end answer I know not, but I never presume even a remonstrance tho' I yesterday said I begged he would put the next doze of oil over her throat himself, he complained bitterly of her being ill to manage, merely because [?her] poor stomach which rejects good food cannot receive a load of [?dinner].
(Letter 59A)

Here is the voice of a mother's growing fear and exasperation. She goes so far as to describe Shortt's prescription of asses' milk, of which he was much in favour, as 'absurd quackery'. Just before their return from Edinburgh, Ann warns Alexander not to expect too much when he sees Sophia again: 'I am anxious that you should not be led by Dr S to expect an improvement lest you should be woefully disappointed' (Letter 61). It would obviously be unwise to try and gauge Shortt's character at this distance in time, but he does appear concerned to maintain his dignity as a judicious and very busy professional man; it may be noted that in five of the seventeen letters we have from him, he signs 'in great haste' or with similar expressions.

Sophia's illness dragged on all through 1824 and into early 1825, its progression difficult to gauge from the surviving correspondence. Doubts about the eventual outcome begin to surface. Mary Young 'would fain hope her life may yet be spared' (Letter 67, unfortunately undated) and Dr Shortt tells Alexander that his 'accounts are so bad that I much fear our endeavours will be unavailing' (Letter 79, 17 February 1824). We see her Aunt Agnes and the two male cousins at Ruthwell urging her to pluck up courage and try to get better. She should consider it her duty to make an effort, for the sake of her parents and sisters (Letter 82A). Throughout this period Alexander is advised to be

'firm' with her in the matter of taking food and medicine (Letters 63, 68 & 87). New recommendations continue to be made: the benefits of exercise and of being 'hurled about' in a carriage are mentioned and a trial of Java Pepper is thoroughly recommended (Letters 68 & 87).

In the end, it was all to no avail. Sophia finally died at the beginning of March 1825. The immediate cause of death is stated as whooping cough, though it appears very likely that her weakened state, enfeebled by months of purging and restricted intake of nourishment, was a major contributing factor. Sophia died shortly after midnight on the morning of Monday 28 February 1825 at the family home at Syllodioch.³⁶ The funeral took place at Borgue on Thursday 3 March. She was buried in the grave of her brothers John and William, who had died in infancy in 1813 and 1815, respectively.

Conclusion

These letters have allowed a wide-ranging view of the Craig family's affairs, the majority belonging to a concentrated period of some four and three quarter years ending shortly after Sophia's death. It has not been the author's intention to pursue the family's history beyond this point, but it will, nevertheless, clearly be of interest to show a little of subsequent events.

Alexander's legal disputes with Murray, and the end of his situation as factor to the Cally Estate, have already been alluded to. Claims and counter claims in the matter are complex and can only be summarised briefly here. Murray asserted that Craig's schemes and projects as factor had been extravagant and to his (Murray's) detriment, but that he himself had been too inexperienced to realise this. Craig's position was that he had made improvements which resulted in an increase of the estate's annual rental income amounting to some £3,000. He pointed out, moreover, that Murray's own intemperate spending had resulted in his running up debts of around £50,000 only three years after succeeding to the unencumbered estate. In 1823, a loan for £34,000 had to be negotiated with the Westminster Insurance company in order to pay off some of Murray's debts. In the end, matters came to a head in 1824 when a bill for £3,000 payable by Murray was disallowed. Craig argued that Murray and his London advisors had engineered this, maliciously entering into a conspiracy to provoke him into giving up his position as factor. Affairs became increasingly fraught. Craig asserted that rumours had been spread accusing him of fraud and the illegal removal of estate papers from Cally; a campaign designed, in Craig's eyes, to deprive him of his lease of Syllodioch, which still had five years to run. Most poignantly, Craig states that his 'mind and his time were then, as they had been for several months before, much occupied with the fate of his eldest daughter, who was then considered by her medical attendants and all around her to be on her death bed', these circumstances being well known to Murray.

In February 1824, John Brown of Enrick, the county roads surveyor, was appointed as Alexander's successor. Whether or not Alexander resigned or was

dismissed now became the principal matter of contention. It was important, because an agreement made in 1814 stipulated that Alexander should be paid an annuity of £200 in the event of his 'being discharged Mr Murray's employment'. Murray evidently refused payment of this pension, and in October 1825 Craig went to law claiming both the annuity and £5,000 in damages. Extant papers suggest that the case dragged on until 1829. Russell says that Craig won his case,³⁷ but Dr David Steel has not been able to find any record of such a judgement.³⁸

Whatever the facts of the matter, Craig and his family removed from Syllodioch and somewhat later are found living in Edinburgh. According to Russell,³⁹ they lived at 23 Ann Street from 1829 to 1834, and subsequently at 6 Carlton Terrace, though the *Post Office General Directory* has their address as 6 Carlton *Street*. It was to be their final abode. Ann died in 1844, Alexander in 1856, and Lillias and Agnes in 1883 and 1896, respectively. There is a family tombstone in Warriston Cemetery, Edinburgh, which also records the dates, and burial at Girthon, of Sophia and her two infant brothers, John and William.

There is little to record about Alexander's years in Edinburgh.⁴⁰ Russell notes that he is described as a 'fundholder' in the 1851 Census and suggests that his accumulated wealth was sufficient to enable him to lead a retired life.⁴¹

Only a little more is known at present about the lives of his two surviving daughters. Russell notes that they were described as 'annuitants' in the 1881 Census, and that Lillias was in some way 'professionally connected with wills'.⁴² They made a joint will in each other's favour: on the death of the second sister, after payment of various relatively minor legacies, the bulk of the residual inventory would be divided equally between James Stewart of Cairnsmore or his surviving children, and any children of their first cousins George John Craig Duncan and William Wallace Duncan. By the time of Agnes' death in 1896, she was worth £16,009, a wealthy lady indeed.

It is, though, in the detail of some of the final bequests that we shall perhaps find the most interest. Provision is made for the care and upkeep of two pet dogs and a cat; and the sum of £100 is left to an anti-vivisection society; we learn that there existed a portrait and miniature of her father painted by John Faed, the Gatehouse artist;⁴³ and the little girl whose older sister had promised to teach her Italian all those years ago (Letter 45A) now bequeathed 'all my Italian books and papers in their bookcase' to a Signor Randall Lemmie in Rome.

It will be remembered that Ann Craig, back in 1818, had expressed her trust that 'when my girls grow up there may be a way forward for their escape from the thousand unpleasant things that I have encountered' (Letter 4). One feels that in Lillias' and Agnes' case her trust may well have proven justified. It is pleasing to record that in 1866 her two daughters were among some 1,500 signatories to the first Women's Suffrage Petition to be presented to Parliament.⁴⁴

Peter Didsbury

NOTES

- ¹ Murray also owned the estates of Broughton (Wigtownshire), and Bonnyglen and Killibegs (north of Ireland).
- ² Russell, J. E. Syllodioch and the Craig family, *Scottish Genealogist*, 54.1 (2007), 23-43, at 30-34.
- ³ In 1827, he is listed in the Kirkcudbright shipping register as a farmer of Syllodioch in the parish of Girthon, the sole owner of the smack *Stone Boat*. The vessel had been built in Gatehouse of Fleet and registered in Kirkcudbright in 1822. See Collin, D. R. *Kirkcudbright Shipping 1300-2005*, Kirkcudbright, 2007.
- ⁴ *Dumfries and Galloway Standard and Advertiser*, 15 October 1856.
- ⁵ Russell, 2007, 29, suggests that Craig had studied law at Edinburgh and says that he was described as a Writer to the Signet at the time of his marriage to Ann Ravenscroft in 1808. It should be noted, however, that Craig is not on the 'List of Writers to H.M. Signet 1594-1890' published in *A History of the Society of Writers to Her Majesty's Signet*, Edinburgh, 1890; neither does his name appear in the list of graduates from Edinburgh University, although this is less conclusive, as formal matriculation and graduation did not become mandatory until the nineteenth century.
- ⁶ A full, if slightly uncritical, account of his activities is given in Wellings, H. R. *Benjamin Boyd in Australia (1842-1849)*, Sydney, no date.
- ⁷ See the State Library of New South Wales [website](#).
- ⁸ For a full biography, see Munn, C. W. *Minister of Money: Henry Duncan, Founder of the Savings Bank Movement*, Edinburgh, 2017.
- ⁹ Munn, 2017, 40.
- ¹⁰ These details are abstracted from Chaplin, A. *Thomas Shortt (Principal Medical Officer in St. Helena) with biographies of some other medical men associated with the case of Napoleon from 1815 -1820*, London, 1914, 7-26, which also discusses his disagreements with other medical officers on St Helena, as well as with the governor regarding Napoleon's treatment and cause of death. It contains a portrait of Shortt. It may be consulted online at the Wellcome Trust [website](#).
- ¹¹ See Stephens, T. The Birtwhistles of Galloway and Craven: drovers, industrialists, writers and a spy, *Transactions of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society*, 83 (2009), 151-179.
- ¹² Misses Jane and Anne Smith are recorded living in Arundel House, Troqueer, Kirkcudbrightshire, in the mid to late 1830s; and Jane is referred to as 'sometime resident' of Corbelly Square, Maxwelltown. See *Scotland's People* [website](#), Legal Records, refs: SC 16/41/5, SC 16/41/9, SC 16/41/10. *Pigot & Co.'s New Commercial Directory of Scotland for 1825-26*, London, 1825, lists the Misses Smith among the 'Resident Gentry' of Troqueer. I am grateful to Judith Hewitt of Dumfries Museum and to her volunteers for providing this information.
- ¹³ *The Carlisle Patriot*, 24 April 1819.

- ¹⁴ Margaret Wright, of the Gatehouse Folk [website](#), kindly undertook a search of the *Scotland's People* website on my behalf for relevant Smiths at Gatehouse in the period 1750 to 1855. None were found, but she did discover this Kirkcudbright family of Smiths.
- ¹⁵ See Paton, T S. *Reports of Cases decided in the House of Lords, upon appeal from Scotland, from 1813 to 1821, Volume VI*, Edinburgh, 1856, 399.
- ¹⁶ National Records of Scotland, RS3/2999/125, General Registers of Sasines, Reversions etc.: third series, 1660–1868. This had been Alexander Birtwhistle's house. I am indebted to Dr David Steel for this information.
- ¹⁷ Rear-Admiral McKerlie had a distinguished naval career. Despite losing an arm in action while still a midshipman, he went on to serve at Trafalgar and then during the Walcheren expedition. For further details, see O'Byrne, W R. *A Naval Biographical Dictionary*, London, 1849.
- ¹⁸ A portrait of James Stewart is reproduced in Hunter, J. *Alexander Murray: Galloway's Self-Taught Genius*, Stranraer, 2014, 28.
- ¹⁹ Russell, 2007, 30.
- ²⁰ Russell, 2007, 30.
- ²¹ For example, Alexander Craig seems to have been a leading exponent of clay burning for its supposed benefits as 'manure', a practice that was briefly in vogue during the second decade of the nineteenth century. In a letter to the *Farmer's Magazine*, William Aiton wrote:

The first account I ever saw of the powerful effects of burnt clay as an efficient manure to every soil, was in some communications from Mr. Alexander Craig, at Cally in Galloway, who recommended it so highly, that one might have expected it was to supersede all other manures [...] Galloway, and even Ireland, was ransacked for clay- burners. Clay-kilns were seen smoking in all directions; and the newspapers and periodical publications were often filled with the most flattering accounts of the newly discovered manure. [...] But this rage for clay burning did not continue long for, though the thing was only started in 1813, I have not seen a kiln burning during the last three or four years; and none of the original believers in its efficacy, within the circle of my knowledge, seem now disposed to speak upon that great improvement. (Aiton, W. On the burning of clay for manure, *Farmer's Magazine*, 22 (1821), 420–424, at 423).

There are interesting details of the history of Craig's advocacy of clay burning, and his own employment of it, in the anonymously written pamphlet, *Cheap Manure Produced by the Newly Discovered Methods of Burning Clay*, York, 1817. It is also perhaps worth noting that Aiton's letter was re-printed in *The American Farmer*, 8 March 1822.

- ²² M'Diarmid, J. *Sketches from Nature*, London, 1830, 31–33. I am indebted to Dr David Devereux for drawing my attention to this reference.
- ²³ Fairley, J A. Autobiographical notes by Thomas Murray, with further notes, *Transactions of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian*

- Society*, series II, 22 (1909-10), 170-171. Again, I have to thank Dr David Devereux for this reference.
- ²⁴ Vickery, A. *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England*, Yale, 1998, 120.
- ²⁵ Demers, P and Moyles, G. *From Instruction to Delight: an Introduction to Children's Literature to 1850*, Toronto, 1982, 141.
- ²⁶ *The Letters of Sara Hutchison*, ed. K Coburn, London, 1954, Letter 133.
- ²⁷ Barker, J. *Wordsworth. A Life*, London, 2000, 522.
- ²⁸ *Cumberland Pacquet, and Ware's Whitehaven Advertiser*, 9 June 1818.
- ²⁹ One guinea was the equivalent of £1.05. Readers who wish to gain an idea of the current value of the historical monetary amounts quoted in the Introduction should consult the *Measuring Worth* [website](#).
- ³⁰ *Cumberland Pacquet, and Ware's Whitehaven Advertiser*, 6 August 1816.
- ³¹ *Cumberland Pacquet, and Ware's Whitehaven Advertiser*, 6 April 1830.
- ³² Coburn, 1954, Letter 224.
- ³³ The notebooks may be consulted online at the *Romantic Circles* [website](#).
- ³⁴ *Letters of Thomas Carlyle 1826-1836*, ed. C E Norton, London, 1888, Letter VI.
- ³⁵ Waldegrave, K. *The Poets' Daughters: Dora Wordsworth and Sara Coleridge*, London, 2012, Chapter 2.
- ³⁶ Not in Edinburgh, as suggested by Russell, 2007, 36.
- ³⁷ Russell, 2007, 34.
- ³⁸ I am grateful to Dr David Steel for letting me see his notes on these legal matters, upon which the above summary is based. The relevant papers are held in the National Records of Scotland, classes CS and GD.
- ³⁹ Russell, 2007, 38.
- ⁴⁰ Though see Appendix C.
- ⁴¹ Russell, 2007, 36.
- ⁴² Russell, 2007, 36-39.
- ⁴³ These were left to a Duncan relative though their whereabouts are now unknown.
- ⁴⁴ See the *Women's Suffrage: History and Citizenship resources for schools* [website](#).

THE LETTERS OF THE
CRAIG FAMILY OF SYLLODIOCH,
KIRKCUDBRIGHTSHIRE
1803-1825

1. FROM HENRY DUNCAN TO ALEXANDER CRAIG

Ruthwell Manse,
25 December 1803

My Dear Sandy^[1]

I am sorry that I cannot yet give you more favorable accounts of your mother's^[2] health than you received from me two days ago. Dr Smith^[3] came down yesterday & leaves us again tomorrow morning. Neither his opinion nor my Brother's^[4] is by any means favorable. Though she does not appear to be materially worse yet in her present reduced state her not gaining strength is of itself an alarming circumstance. In short, my dear friend, your sister is anxious that you should return as soon as possible, your mother has herself expressed a wish to see you again, & if it be not very inconvenient I think you should not delay your coming later than the middle of this week. I know that you are very much engaged & that circumstances may occur to make it impossible for you to leave Gatehouse immediately. If this be the case I hope you will write by return of post that you may not be expected – I shall at all events write you again on Wednesday that should you be obliged to stay your anxiety may be relieved. I am, with true regard

Your sincere friend,
Henry Duncan

¹ The letter is addressed to 'Alexr. Craig Esqre, Academy, Gatehouse of Fleet'. James Murray had instituted an Episcopalian church at Gatehouse to serve the many English families who had been induced to settle there. An academy was attached to this chapel for the education of their children, though not confined to the English. It was stipulated that the person holding the living should be a member of the Church of England and that he should combine the offices both of clergyman and teacher. The Reverend Matthew Vicars was the incumbent. Craig had been appointed factor for the Murrays in 1801, but it is not known where he was living in 1803.

² Barbara Orr (1723-1804). See the Introduction: biographical notes.

³ Not identified.

⁴ Thomas Tudor Duncan (1776-1858), who had studied both divinity and medicine at Edinburgh University, being awarded his M.D. in 1803. He was the youngest brother and close friend of the author of this letter, the Reverend Henry Duncan (1774-1846), minister of Ruthwell from 1799 to 1843. See the Introduction: biographical notes.

2. FROM ALEXANDER CRAIG TO ANN CRAIG

Bonnyglen^[5]
Saturday 15 August 1812

My Dear Ann –

I think it probable Mr Murray^[6] will leave this place for Derry on Tuesday, embark on Wednesday, wait on Dr Richardson^[7] at Portrush on Thursday, & examine his fiorin meadows & look at the Giants Causeway on Friday, reembark & be at the Roughpoint^[8] on Sunday. If the wind be moderate & from the West or North the above arrangement may be easily accomplished on Sunday when you may be on the look out for us, but if the wind be contrary or a calm our voyage may be prolonged a day or two.

I expected to have had the pleasure of a letter from you this morning but the post bag has just arrived without any & as there will be no more arrivals till Tuesday I shall have no chance of hearing of your welfare & the bairns until I am setting out on my return, I trust however that Lillias has got the better of her complaint by this time & that you are all going on in your usual way. The weather has been very favourable for the survey of the estate, there having been no rain until yesterday, we have not yet seen the whole of the property & I suppose will leave the country without looking at some mountain farms which lie detached & the access not convenient.

I am just going down to breakfast, & as I am in perfect good health, I shall not postpone the pleasure of eating since I flatter myself that an assurance of my welfare will afford you as much satisfaction as if I had filled the sheet. Be so good as to let Mrs Farr^[9] know that Mr Murray may be expected on Sunday & believe me ever

Yours most affectionately
Alex Craig

⁵ One of two estates in Donegal belonging to the Murrays. The other one was Killibegs.

⁶ Alexander Murray (1789–1845). He inherited the Cally, Broughton, Bonnyglen, and Killibegs estates as a minor in 1799. He came of age in 1810, so the tour which is the subject of this letter might reflect his first visit to his Irish estates.

⁷ Dr William Richardson (1749–1820), the leading exponent of the beneficial uses of fiorin grass (*Agrostis stolonifera* or creeping bent) in agriculture. It enjoyed considerable vogue as a hay crop after the publication of his *Essay on Fiorin Grass: shewing the circumstances under which it may be found in all parts of England, its extraordinary properties, and great utility to the practical farmer*, London, 1810.

⁸ Near Sandgreen, on the Water of Fleet, Kirkcudbrightshire.

⁹ The context in this and the following letter makes it reasonable to suppose that Mrs Farr was the housekeeper, or other upper servant, at Cally.

3. FROM ANN CRAIG TO ALEXANDER CRAIG

Syllodioch
22 May 1814

I did not receive your letter my dearest^[10] till after church time, of course could not send the papers to Mr Young^[11] by this day's mail, but finding them exactly where you directed, I have the parcel put up ready to go tomorrow. I did not observe the copies you mentioned in the bundle, but being very stupid and afraid to discompose them by search I wrote a note to Mr Y. begging he would attribute the sending of the copies provided they be in the bundle, to the real cause namely my fear of discomposing the papers.

The children are quite well, but any expression or a hope that you may no more return for we are better off without you, melts Lill into a passion of tears, as she says me canna want papa.^[12] Buff^[13] is too shrewd to be discomposed by such conversation. I am greatly better since about the 12 but far from nimble.

I have a letter from Agnes^[14] today inquiring after you, you must write them when you intend leaving town. I'll tell you why I was vexed with you about Christy,^[15] a few days after you left Ruthwell, I had a letter saying you had invited her and asking if it was agreeable for me to receive her, now I thought you ought not to have left that a matter of doubt.

Dan,^[16] who is behaving as well as possible, has already led nearly 30 cartloads of ashes. James was obliged to cool the large pits for the purpose of getting some led away and the odd turff is blasing away at present in small pits, but it is out of the question having ashes sufficient for the whole field,^[17] but I am told turnips will grow very well with moss compost; however, I doubt the

¹⁰ The letter is addressed to 'Mr Craig/Mrs Johnstons/76 Sloan Street/London'.

¹¹ Alexander Young of Harburn (1757-1842), factor to the duke of Hamilton. See the Introduction: biographical notes.

¹² *i.e.* I cannot do without papa.

¹³ It seems probable that this is a nickname for Sophia. At the age of five and a half she might have been adjudged too old to be worried by teasing about Papa's non-return. Another possibility is that it is a reference to the as yet unborn William, with whom Mrs Craig was then pregnant and who would be born on 11 October. It must even be considered that Buff was a pet animal. This is the only time that the name is used in the correspondence.

¹⁴ Agnes Craig (1772-1832), sister of Alexander Craig. She was married to the Reverend Henry Duncan.

¹⁵ Probably the Reverend Henry Duncan's sister Christian (1782-1867).

¹⁶ Dan and the James mentioned in the next sentence were probably outdoor or farm servants at Syllodioch.

¹⁷ This appears to refer to the practice of clay burning. See the Introduction, note 21.

pits will be all led off before we have rain, of which we are in great want, and without which the turnip seed cannot be sown.

I observe the lower moss is beginning to spring, and Dan has kept it constantly under water during this scorching weather. Your clover is [*interlined*: almost] entirely consumed by the hares, and the impatience of those tenants I have seen for news respecting their extirpation is very great indeed.

Should we find a shortcome in ashes as I expect we shall not risk the Swedish seed^[18] with compost and with the very first proper weather shall sow the ground prepared and let the want come to the [*two illegible words*].

I am so happy to think you have met with Keith,^[19] give my dear love to him. Mr Stewart^[20] has been very ill but is now got better. I think it probable some of the family will be here next week. Drumwall^[21] tells me there is no doubt of the cattle selling very high at Cally on Tuesday. Thomas is great beyond all expression upon the occasion, and poor Dumb Tom is in extreme misery.^[22]

I must not omit telling you that the Moss road is again sunk, and that the depredations of the caterpillar is most rapid upon your berry bushes. I shall walk over to Cally in the morning to look your room there for the Broughton papers and speak to Ramage,^[23] and in the meantime, good night and God Bless you.

Cally, Monday.

I have found the tin box here, and shall leave it with Mrs Farr for your further orders, as Mr Ramage will not have a pine^[24] to send for a fortnight or three weeks, when he expects to have some very fine ones, he will attend to your

¹⁸ *i.e.* seeds of swedes.

¹⁹ Keith Stewart (1792-1822). See the Introduction: biographical notes.

²⁰ Patrick Stewart (1734-1814). See the Introduction: biographical notes.

²¹ Probably an example of the practice of referring to an individual by farm name rather than surname. A family of McMickens farmed at Upper (or High) Drumwall in the parish of Girthon, Kirkcudbrightshire, at this period. William McMicken and his spouse Grace Houston are commemorated on a family monument in Old Girthon Kirkyard. He died in 1854, aged 72, and she in 1871, aged 84. Drumwall formed part of the Cally estate.

²² Person(s) not identified.

²³ *Memoirs of the Caledonian Horticultural Society*, 3 (1825), 20, lists William Ramage as having been admitted member on 9 June 1812. His address is given as 'Callyhouse, Gatehouse'. In the 1851 Census, he is described as a retired farmer, aged 68, living on the north side of High Street, Gatehouse. It would appear from references in this correspondence that Ramage was specifically a nurseryman, perhaps employed in some official capacity by the Cally estate. However, there is no mention of him in the discussion of the gardens at Cally in either Coombey, N. *Cally Story: the Development of the Parks and Pleasure Grounds of Cally by the Murray Family*, Gatehouse of Fleet, 2007 or Steel, D. *The Gatehouse Adventure: the Early History of Gatehouse of Fleet*, Gatehouse of Fleet, 2011.

²⁴ Probably in the sense of 'pineapple'.

directions about the stalks. Mrs Farr went with John Moor^[25] to Parkers yesterday to fetch home poor Tom McMiken,^[26] she says in a few days longer it is her opinion he could not have been moved, so I fear your quack medicine will prove of no use to him. I think the medicine chest beautiful, it came quite safe, and I do not want anything, either for myself or the weans,^[27] but if you took the trouble of looking for, and comparing linen with your shirts, perhaps you might be tolerably able to judge. My mother can procure it beautiful at Newton Stewart for 4/ and 5/ per yard but advises me to wait a little. Mrs Farr wants a bottle of marking ink from G. Watts and Co. 478 Strand^[28] and two pints of bleaching liquid from F. Andsons Haymarket.^[29]

Adieu my dear love, believe me your truly affectionate wife

Ann Craig

Mrs F. wants two boxes of salts of lemon.^[30]

4. FROM ANN CRAIG TO ALEXANDER CRAIG

Syllodioch
4 April 1818

My dearest Miss Brown^[31] has just brought me your two letters and she and her brother are to drink tea here tomorrow when I expect all the news.

Since I last wrote I can safely say that Agnes has not slept put all her nods together an hour and a half any one night, not so much from fever which thank

²⁵ Perhaps John Moor, linen and woollen draper, Front Street, Gatehouse of Fleet, as listed in *Pigot & Co.'s New Commercial Directory of Scotland for 1825-26*, London, 1825 [hereafter *Pigot's Directory 1825-26*].

²⁶ Neither Parker nor McMicken have been identified.

²⁷ Scots for children.

²⁸ G. Watts, Chymist & Druggist, 478 Strand, as listed in *Kent's Directory for the Year 1794. Cities of London and Westminster, & Borough of Southwark etc.*, London, 1794.

²⁹ Not identified.

³⁰ This was scribbled on the outside of the letter as an afterthought.

³¹ Marion Brown and her brother John farmed at Enrick, c.1.5 miles (2.4 km) south east of Gatehouse. The 1851 Census records them as being aged sixty-two and seventy respectively, unmarried, and living on the north side of the High Street, Gatehouse. He is described as a retired land steward and she as an annuitant. John Brown took over as factor of the Cally estate after Alexander Craig either resigned or was dismissed. See Russell, 2007, 34.

God is now abated, as from the pain and itching of her dans^[32] as she calls the pocks; her lamentation and demand of deedle^[33] is incessant we rock her the whole night I did it myself on Thursday but found I was the worse of it, and now make Betty^[34] sit, and sleep through the day; she has slept 2½ hours this forenoon and really appears at present tolerably well, but with night all the distress has hitherto resumed; the other two are better, Sophia's mouth sadly scabbed Lill looking thin as a lath. I am pretty well considering, but having a rheumatism in my throat and neck I have only once ventured cross the door tho' the weather is fine, I can therefore tell you nothing of the farm farther than that Dan came to the window to complain the pheasants; who are undoing all his garden labour scraping up his potatoe [*sic*] sets &c.

I have a letter from Mrs Vicars which completely overset me for a day; poor Margaret^[35] is dying of consumption the rest are in their usual. Mr & Mrs More^[36] sent over on thursday [*sic*] to offer me an afternoon visit to day; but this morning a postponement till tuesday arrived at which I am not sorry because by that time I would gladly hope Agnes will be better which will enable me to enjoy them more. The Smiths^[37] are to be here on Monday afternoon and have invited the girls to return with them to Gatehouse, from whence I am to send for them on tuesday evening. I am half afraid to comply on account of the small pox, but Sophia is quite keen, professing she has no fear on the subject, and they are such good children I can hardly find [it] in my heart to deny their so reasonable a request; and as they will only be in Mr Smiths I hope they run no particular risk. I have not heard either from Cairnsmoor^[38] or Challock^[39] since my last, I therefore hope that both families are improving in health.

I opened a letter from Shannon to you dated from Liverpool last Monday when he expected to be home in 5 or six days, he took four days to go and had some very bad weather to encounter; he means to bring 8 or ten tons of the best coals for ballast, and says potatoes are selling at from 2/10 to 3/ per 90 lb

³² Or 'Duns': the reading is uncertain. Agnes was only twenty-two months old at the time.

³³ Scots to dandle a child.

³⁴ Presumably a servant. The same person is apparently mentioned in Letter 25.

³⁵ Margaret Vicars (b. 1799), daughter of the Reverend Matthew Vicars (Note 1).

³⁶ Not identified.

³⁷ See the Introduction: biographical notes.

³⁸ Or Cairnsmore, an estate in the parish of Kirkmabreck, Kirkcudbrightshire. It was owned by Dr John Ravenscroft (c.1750-1781) from 1773 to 1793 and had thus been Ann Craig's home before her marriage. See the Introduction: biographical notes.

³⁹ Or Challock, a farm in the parish of Penninghame, Wigtownshire. The home, for much of the period of this correspondence, of Ann Craig's sister Jane Ravenscroft (1778-1848) and her husband William McKeand (1743-1826). The family name is regularly spelled McKean in these letters.

and that a cargo of them would he thinks turn out profitable.^[40] I am very happy the corn sloop has done so well in her voyage, and that her loading is likely to pay. I am always anxious where you have any concern lest your judgement in purchasing should be called in question.

I have endeavoured to cast all care respecting our future destination as far from me as I possibly can, trusting that when my girls grow up there may be a way forward for their escape from the thousand unpleasant things that I have encountered these last 18 years, and for myself I can continue my old straight forward jog tho' I am not sanguine enough to hope ever to succeed so as to become feelless.^[41]

I have written you a true state of all our healths and if you do not hear again you may conclude all are better, at any rate there is no reason for your being uneasy, for should Agnes grow worse I shall instantly let you know and I will not indulge a hope of seeing you before the end of next week that I may not be disappointed; and I have been so generous I can tell you, as to rejoice you were free from the painful nights I have passed since you left me. Give my best love to our dear Susan in which the bairns join, also to Margaret, present my kind compliments to Mr & Mrs Hogg who I hear has charmed Mr Balmont as much as her daughter which is saying a great deal.^[42] I beg my best respects to Mr Youngs family if you think proper, and always believe me your truly affectionate wife

Ann Craig

⁴⁰ 'Shannon' is possibly William Shannon, a mariner who, some years later, served as master of Alexander Craig's own ship *Stone Beat*. This was a half-decked smack built at Gatehouse in 1822 and registered as having Kirkcudbright as its home port. See 'The Shipping Registers for Dumfries 1824-1904, Kirkcudbright 1824-1841, Stranraer 1824-1908 and Wigtown 1836-1908' on the Dumfries and Galloway Council [website](#). It may also be noted that one Peter Shannon was acting as master of *Cardoness Castle* and then of *Lady Anne Murray of Gatehouse* in the period 1822-1825. These were owned, respectively, by Thomas Birkett and James McMicken, both of Gatehouse, where they were built. *Pigot's Directory 1825-26* lists Birkett as a tanner and timber dealer in Fleet Street while William Shannon appears as the landlord of *The Ship*, an inn in Fleet Street.

⁴¹ Scots for without feeling, numb.

⁴² Mr Hogg is probably to be identified as Dr Robert Hogg, surgeon, 68 George Street, Edinburgh (Note 72). Susan was possibly their daughter. Margaret and Mr Balmont have not been identified.

5. FROM ANN CRAIG TO SOPHIA AND LILLIAS CRAIG

Syllodioch
1 July 1820

My very dear children,

I know it will afford you much pleasure to hear that last Friday evening while I was preparing to put little Agnes to bed sitting at 9 o'clock with every door and window open in order to expel as soon as possible the vile smell of paint, your dear Papa arrived much fatigued with walking all the way from Balmangan,^[43] where he had been put on shore, having left Whitehaven in the Kirkcudbright fish boat on Thursday night. I did exceedingly rejoice to hear that you both stood the sea sickness much better than I had expected, and that it had proved a complete cure for Sophias feverishness. When we parted I walked to the bathing house^[44] where I was joined by Dr Kennedy^[45] and we sat upon the rocks till darkness hid the sloop from our view. I saw you all upon deck and waved my handkerchief but your papa says none of you observed me.

We have got the house completely cleaned, and have all the furniture replaced, you may therefore imagine we look very beautiful; poor Agnes would be lonely indeed were it not for the chickens she will sit for hours upon the green covered with them, some eating out of her lap some out of her hand while others more favoured feed from her mouth you may believe the quantity of bread consumed is not small, which would be of little consequence did not her extreme kindness hinder their thriving, but her general reply to all Marys^[46] remonstrances is that she got charge of the chickens from Sophia and has therefore a good right to do with them what she pleases.

I have heard nothing of our Cairnsmoor friends since Grandmamma^[47] left us, but I heard from your kind Aunt Agnes the other day, they are all well at Ruthwell, along with your Aunts letter to me came a piece of stuff^[48] to make winter frocks for you, but [*interlined*: being too late for your trunk] they shall go some time soon to Whitehaven, where your father has fixed with a Mr

⁴³ A property on Kirkcudbright Bay, c.9 miles (14.5 km) to the south east of Syllodioch.

⁴⁴ This establishment was at Sandgreen. See also Letter 46.

⁴⁵ *Pigot's Directory 1825-26* lists Charles Kennedy as a surgeon in Front Street, Gatehouse.

⁴⁶ Presumably a servant.

⁴⁷ Lillias Miller (1745-1833), Ann Craig's mother. See the Introduction: biographical notes.

⁴⁸ A term used to describe any woollen material.

Shannon^[49] to forward any parcels we may have to send to Ambleside. Aunt also sent you each a pair of nice mitts but she seems to have a poor idea of the size of Lills arm as those intended for her exactly fit Agnes, I have therefore kept them, but Lill is equally obliged by the intention.

We called at Knockbrex^[50] yesterday to tell Mr T Mure the welfare of Mr and Miss Brown who were so very kind to you, they are crowded with company but have promised to to [*sic*] pay us a visit next week against which time I would gladly hope to hear either of or from you.

Offer my kind and respectful compliments to Miss Dowling,^[51] tell her that although I would not wish to encroach upon her valuable time, yet a letter from her giving me her candid opinion of you both would be a great favour conferred upon your father and myself. I shall also be happy to hear that the kind and quantity of cloaths I judged proper for you meets with her approbation, but I do with perfect confidence invest her with full power to provide whatever she may deem necessary for you, and as she now stands in the place of your mother, do my dear children for your own sakes love as well as respect her; the lady who finished my education proved a tender mother to me through her life, and her family are my dear and warm friends, her daughter Mrs Nicholson of Moresby^[52] wrote me by your papa requesting her house might be your home should you ever pass through Whitehaven and kindly regretted not seeing you at this time.

Mr Murray had the misfortune to be thrown from his horse yesterday, and I I [*sic*] understand is seriously hurt, your father is gone up to Cally to enquire for him, as I shall be too late for this days post you shall hear in the turning down how he is tomorrow morning.

⁴⁹ The use of the indefinite article suggests that this is not the mariner known to the girls but a resident of Whitehaven. Parson, W and White, W. *History, Directory, and Gazetteer of the Counties of Cumberland and Westmorland*, Leeds, 1829 [hereafter *Parson & White's Directory 1829*], lists no one of this name; there are, however, frequent references in the *Cumberland Pacquet*, and *Ware's Whitehaven Advertiser*, from June 1822 onwards, to the bankruptcy of William Shannon of Whitehaven, a draper and tea dealer. The two occupations are very commonly linked in trades directories of the nineteenth century and are often further qualified as 'travelling', presumably serving outlying settlements and farms. Such a tradesperson might well have been suitable for facilitating carriage of parcels onward to Ambleside, Cumbria.

⁵⁰ A property in the parish of Borgue, Kirkcudbrightshire. The owner at this time was Adam Thomson-Mure, who died in 1822 and was buried in Kirkandrews kirkyard.

⁵¹ Ann Dorcas Dowling (1784-1837) was the proprietor of a Ladies' Academy at Hill Top, Ambleside. See the Introduction: biographical notes.

⁵² A small village situated c.2.5 miles (4 km) north east of Whitehaven, Cumbria. *Parson & White's Directory 1829* lists a Mrs Mary Nicholson as one of its inhabitants.

Wednesday morning.

P S By a note from Lady Ann,^[53] Mr Murray had got upon the sofa [*sic*] late last night and was easier. Mr Smiths family are all well, and so are all your other friends in this neighbourhood.

Adieu my dearest children your papa and Agnes join me in dear love to you both.

Ann Craig

6. FROM ANN CRAIG TO SOPHIA AND LILLIAS CRAIG

Syllodioch
7 July 1820

My dearest children –

Sophias letter reached me this day, your Papa and I were well pleased with the writing and the few mistakes that occurred through it, we hope to see corrected in the next epistle.

We are sorry to understand that you have been unwell and are for the first time in your life under the hands of a doctor; we hope for better accounts in your next, but when you are both well we do not desire you to write oftener than once every month alternately, and we think that once every quarter you should address a letter to your Grand-Mamma and Aunt Henry,^[54] you write first to Grandmamma^[55] and Lillias to Aunt, and next quarter reverse the matter. Direct to Cairnsmoor by Newton Stewart, and to Mrs Henry Duncan^[56] Ruthwell by Dumfries and you need only put Gatehouse upon our letters, the addition of Kirkcudbright detains them a day longer on the road.

I do not wonder at your wishing [?we] were situated nearer Ambleside it is perfectly impossible that at first you can find the best school in the world as agreeable as home, but believe me if you both prove attentive to your studies and amiable and candid in your temper your feelings at the end of six months

⁵³ Alexander Murray of Broughton married Lady Anne Bingham (1797-1850), daughter of the 2nd earl of Lucan, in 1816. They set up home at Cally.

⁵⁴ The Reverend Henry Duncan and his wife Agnes were affectionately known to all at Ruthwell as Uncle and Aunt Henry. See Munn, C W. *Minister of Money: Henry Duncan, Founder of the Savings Bank Movement*, Edinburgh, 2017, 42.

⁵⁵ Lillias Miller (Note 47).

⁵⁶ Agnes Craig (Note 14).

will be very different, be kind and affectionate to all around you, and do not upon any account indulge fretfulness which can only render you both contemptable.

You ask after your chickens. I am sorry to say the weasel has destroyed some and the dismal bad weather many of them; the German hen has still five, old B[*illegible*]es hen has one, and about twenty are following [the] other two old ladies, whose names and designations I am ignorant of, but I believe one of them is Sophias own. Mary gave [?Irving] the pi[e]ces that were left, and nine of the elder chickens still live, though they are from handling in a very shabby condition.

The rabbits have totally spoiled your garden, Mr Ramage was here the other day when he promised to plant it up with ever greens and roses and I shall endeavour to have it very neat for you against next June your flowers are to be within the wall. I have heard nothing from Cairnsmoor since you left home, therefore cannot tell you how Uncle Keith is but I hope he is nearly well as Mr Stewart of Gategill^[57] saw him in good care about ten days ago at Casstramont.^[58]

Old Mrs Robson is still at Disdow^[59] but the constant rain is sadly against her bathing.

Miss Catherine Smith is arrived at Gatehouse on a visit I have not yet seen her. It is probable Mr Mrs & Miss E Young will visit the Lakes on their return from Guernsey when you will be sure to see them, and by and bye Miss Smith on her way home from Yorkshire.

I send this by Captain Shannon to Whitehaven with your parcel of stuff, Miss Dowling will direct when it is necessary to make it up, to her and Miss E Dowling^[60] we beg our best compliments, and shall hope to hear from either of them with their earliest convenience. Agnes is quite well and speaks much of you both, you need not fear being forgotten by her, or by your truly affectionate father, and mother

Ann Craig

P.S. pray did you receive the parcel of stockings your father sent you from Whitehaven tell me when you next write.

⁵⁷ A property in the parish of Borgue owned by Hugh Stewart (c.1753-1825), a former lieutenant in the Royal Navy. He was succeeded by his son Alexander James Stewart (c.1798- 1840), who was listed as resident there in *Pigot's Directory 1825-26*.

⁵⁸ *i.e.* Castramont, a property in the parish of Girthon, part of the Murray of Broughton estate.

⁵⁹ A property in the parish of Girthon, part of the Murray of Broughton estate. Mrs Robson has not been identified.

⁶⁰ The distinction between Miss Dowling and Miss E(lizabeth) Dowling should be noted throughout these letters. See also the Introduction: biographical notes.

7. FROM ALEXANDER CRAIG TO SOPHIA AND LILLIAS CRAIG

Whitehaven
27 July 1820

My Dear Children –

You would be greatly disappointed when you learned that I had set off by the coach immediately after parting with you; had I consulted my own feelings I should have remained another day at Ambleside, but I was convinced that by prolonging my stay I was only adding to, in place of allaying the state of agitation which distressed you. I do not blame you for having been unable to repress the expression of your feelings, on being left for the first time among strangers, but I make no doubt you will yourselves, in the course of a few weeks wonder, that you possessed so little fortitude on the occasion. I need not repeat to you the many excellent advices which your mother gave you before leaving home, because I am sure you will act up to them; we shall be much disappointed if you do not only obey, but obey with cheerfulness & alacrity every desire of Miss Dowling; we trust you will always behave with kindness & attention to your schoolfellows & thereby insure, at least deserve a similar return on their part. We expect you will pay particular attention to your studies, for it would grieve us beyond measure were we to know that you were considered stupid among your classfellows, you must however [?]lay] your account with meeting with difficulties occasionally but these a little perseverance will soon overcome, & the facility with which you acquired your lessons at home makes us sanguine of your getting fast on at school.

I got from Mr Woods servant the comb which Lillias left behind her at Cockermouth, and Mr May gave me a glove in return for that which his shop boy had put up by mistake; I shall send the gloves by this letter, they are not worth one half of the expense of the carriage, but I think you will gladly open your little purse for the pleasure of this letter from me, which I hope will effectually banish from Sophia the slight fever that had assailed her; I shall expect to hear from you in a few days & trust your letter will inform us of your being quite well.

I expect to sail this evening & hope to breakfast at home tomorrow morning. It is possible I may be at Ambleside in the month of October but I am not yet quite positive. Adieu.

Your Affectionate Father
Alex Craig

To make up a respectable parcel I send three pair of woollen stockings for Sophia which I hope will fit her, they are the best Whitehaven can afford.

8. FROM ALEXANDER CRAIG TO SOPHIA AND LILLIAS CRAIG

Cally
10 August 1820

My Dear Children –

Your mother and I were grieved to learn by Sophias letter that she had been sick, & was still under the care of Dr Scambler.⁶¹ What a change! that Sophia who never used to ail any thing should now be complaining. I am inclined to think her illness is more upon her spirits than her body, in short that she is afflicted with the “maladie du pays” as the French term it, a disease which you probably never heard of, but which I shall endeavour to explain to you.

Before the late revolution took place in France, it was the custom for many of the young men of Switzerland, to leave their native country & enlist as soldiers in the French service. It was observed that whenever the regimental bands of music played any of the Swiss national airs, that many of the young soldiers were seized with a kind of languor, which quite unfitted them from performing their military duties, & to prevent a recurrence of the disease, the French Government strictly forbade any of the bands of music, to play any Swiss tunes in the hearing of the young Swiss soldiers, & the consequence was the disease became less frequent in its occurrence; this disease the lively French people named the “maladie du pays” which may be translated “a pining after home” or “the home sickness”.

It has also been observed, that many of the soldiers of our Scotch Highland regiments have, when abroad, been assailed by the maladie du pays, on hearing some of our favourite national airs played. So much for an account of the maladie du pays, now for a more familiar example. You will remember having seen Master [?Connel] at Ruthwell, you know he was occasionally allowed to go home for a few days, & on his return he wept very much & made himself quite unhappy for sometime [*sic*]; this was having a fit of the maladie du pays, his schoolfellows very good naturedly bore with his disease for a while, but at last they tired, & fairly laughed him out of it, so that he could go home & return to school without feeling any symptoms of the maladie du pays.

This disease seems entirely to be the effects of association. You my dear children have from your infancy been placed under too little restraint perhaps at home, & been allowed to run about & amuse yourselves at pleasure, of course the idea of home is associated with every thing that is delightful; your being now for the first time left not only among strangers, but also placed under a certain degree of restraint, which is absolutely necessary at every school, must

⁶¹ Dr Richard Scambler (d. 1820) had set up practice in Ambleside in 1808. He was physician to the Wordsworth family and much esteemed by them.

produce an idea of an opposite nature, I am not surprized therefore that Sophia is sensible of the difference, & imagines she would like school better were your mother at Ambleside – she mentions in her letter that she was taken ill after eating cherries, I think it is likely she may have been so; she disordered her stomach by eating cherries immediately before leaving home, the cherries would therefore forcibly recal[l] to her mind the idea of home, which contrasted with the idea of school was quite sufficient to bring on a fit of the *maladie du pays*, but which she must endeavour to get quit of as quickly as possible, & to effect it a little exertion of her mind is only necessary. I hope therefore she will soon come to reflect that a great many of your schoolfellows have as kind parents, & homes as delightful as you have, yet they have had firmness enough to prevent their feelings from over powering their judgement – I know Lillias will “do her best” to act properly & I trust Sophia will perform her duty also, & then there will be no occasion for the attendance of Dr Scambler or his powders. Your mother & I anxiously desire that both of you should conciliate the good opinion & regard of Miss Dowling, but these cannot be obtained if you continue to pine after home, as Miss Dowling must in that case be compelled to look upon you as two silly little girls.

The foregoing dissertation on the *maladie du pays* (which you will think very prosing) has extended farther than I anticipated, & left little room to mention any thing about home which would be more interesting to you, but it is of less consequence since your mother wrote to you some days ago, along with a parcel to be forwarded by the coach, I believe the vessel which is to convey it to Whitehaven is still detained in the river by contrary winds so that there is a chance of this letter reaching you before your mothers.

We have had very bad weather, it has rained every day since I left you at Ambleside, & last Tuesday it fell in torrents more like the accounts we read of rain in tropical countries than what we usually experience in this country.

I sent you some stockings from Whitehaven, you do not mention them; if the parcel has not reached you, enquiry should be made after it at Mr Chapmans,^[62] it was sent from Whitehaven on 28 July. I hope you will pay attention to your studies & when you return at Midsummer I have no doubt you will be able to solve on the globe every problem in geography that I may propose to you. When either of you write mention the numbers in your class & what place you occupy in it, I am not very anxious that you should be quite at the top, though I shall regret if you stand at the bottom. Give my kind regards to Miss Dowling & believe me

Your Affectionate Father
Alex Craig

⁶² Not identified.

Since writing the foregoing yesterday your mother has had a letter from Miss Dowling and we feel particularly obliged by her attention in writing as we were anxious to learn how you were. It gives us great pleasure to know that you are better and we trust there is little chance of your relapsing. Your mother and sister are both quite well, Agnes has not forgotten you – she often wishes you were back from Ambleside, but whenever the weather [?] should be clement she is out amusing herself and seems as fond of chickens as Lillias, the wet weather has occasioned the death of some & the weasel of others since you left home, but there are yet a great many surviving. We have had no word from Cairnsmoor since you went away.

9. FROM ANN CRAIG TO SOPHIA AND LILLIAS CRAIG

Syllodioch
19 September 1820

My very dear children

Sophias letter made your father and myself very happy because it told us you were both well and doing well; and we trust neither of you will remain at the foot of any of the classes for want of attention and application; you now find that we were right in begging you to attend to grammar while at home, but you could not conquer your aversion to that part of your studies, and must therefore struggle with the difficulty now; but I do not fear your soon finding all things comparatively easy, and entreat you both never to be disheartened or out of humour when your classfellows get above you.

Agnes and I spent a week at Cairnsmoor about a fortnight since, where Agnes had one of her severe attacks of fever, and being distressed both before and after her illness terminated, she was cross and exceedingly troublesome to me, and disagreeable to the family, I was glad when I got her home, she is now quite well and running about in great glee with the chickens, of which only 15 survive out of 6 dozen and 5.

Your Grandmama is very stout, so are all your Aunts except Mrs McKerlie^[63] who is delicate, the Captain has grown very fat, he was kind in his enquiries after you and sent his best love, he promised to be here some day soon, and so did Uncle Keith who was here with James^[64] last week, he is quite free of hooping cough^[65] now but complains much of weakness.

⁶³ The girls' aunts were Margaret Stewart (1783-1845), Harriet Stewart (1784-1872) and Dunlop Stewart (1785-1871). See the Introduction: biographical notes.

⁶⁴ Keith Stewart's brother James. See the Introduction: biographical notes.

⁶⁵ Now known as whooping cough or pertussis.

I do not expect any of your Aunts here soon. Margaret is going away to Sir James^[66] & Dunlop cannot be spared from home, she is to write Sophia very soon. Your Papa returned from Edinburgh last Sunday where he had been for a few days, he left cousin Susan well. Mr Young is still in Germany, he has been so long detained at Paris that we doubt he will not have time to take the Lakes on his way home. I have [*i.e.* had] a letter from Aunt Henry the other day, she longs to hear from you, and says George John^[67] is proposing to pen an epistle to one of you, they are all well at Ruthwell and have been crowded with company ever since they were here. Mr and Mrs Brown^[68] with their little boy arrived from Whitehaven at Knockbrenn ten days ago, I called upon them but owing to the death of Mr Samuel Thomson^[69] we have not been able to have them here, he is to be buried today. I saw Mr Smiths family last Sunday they have their Cousin Cathrine from Dumfries, and Miss Mckerlie from Edinburgh staying with them at present they have not yet heard when Miss Smith leaves Yorkshire her arrival at Ambleside will be a great pleasure to you, especially as I fear your papas visit is rather uncertain. Uncle James says he rejoices to hear you have been pulling nuts he thinks such exercise good for you. I mean to go a nutting myself this afternoon tho' B[*illegible*] and Baintons^[70] shearers have [*illegible*] nearly all pulled hereabout. I met [*page damaged – three lines*] Ben Boyd^[71] at Cairnsmoor he is come from London to see his friends for a few weeks, and is grown a tall young man he asked kindly after good King Arthur, Lillias knows who goes by that name, his sisters are well, but Miss Boyd is too tall and looks very unhealthy. I beg you will offer our united kind regards to the Miss Dowlings, tell Miss D I felt much obliged by her kind attention in adding a few lines to Sophias letter when she can spare time but I am certain that can only be seldom I should be most happy to hear from her. Agnes talks to every body of her two sisters and threatens to complain to you when she is offended, she joins her papa and me in dear love to you both

Your affectionate Mother
Ann Craig

⁶⁶ Sir James Hay (1765-1837). He was colonel of the 2nd Dragoon Guards and lieutenant-general of Edinburgh. He is buried in Greyfriars kirkyard, Edinburgh.

⁶⁷ George John Duncan (1806-1868), son of the Reverend Henry Duncan. See the Introduction: biographical notes.

⁶⁸ These unidentified Browns, with connections to Whitehaven and later Liverpool, are not to be confused with the Browns of Enrick. They are also mentioned in Letters 16 and 24.

⁶⁹ His death in 1820 is recorded on the family monument in Kirkandrews kirkyard, Kirkcudbrightshire.

⁷⁰ See also Letter 81.

⁷¹ Benjamin Boyd (1801-1851). See the Introduction: biographical notes.

10. FROM ALEXANDER CRAIG TO LILLIAS CRAIG

Cally
23 October 1820

My Dear Lillias –

Your letter was two days longer in making its appearance than what your mother had calculated, & she had begun to be uneasy dreading lest indisposition had prevented you from writing; her fears were however happily dissipated on receiving your letter.

I think Miss Dowling is very kind & attentive to you youngsters in letting you see the romantic scenery around Ambleside, & I have no doubt her indulgence will have the proper effect of causing you to redouble your attention to your studies. If writing were not so arduous a task to you I should have been glad if you had described all you saw on your different excursions, but that pleasure must be postponed for a year or two until your ideas be more enlarged & until you be able to use your pen with facility. Sophia I think might try & give her mother a description of Langdale, or some other place she saw in the course of your excursions.

I have been tourifying of late myself, having been obliged to be twice in Edinburgh during the last month – while there I saw your cousin Susan, she enquired kindly after you & she would be glad if you were to write to her; in case either Sophia or you can find leisure to write her address is No. 68 George Street.^[72]

When I was last in Edinburgh I went to Hamilton Palace^[73] where I was introduced to Mr Owen^[74] of Lanark Cotton Mills a gentleman who has rendered himself conspicuous of late by his schemes for improving the condition of mankind, he invited me to his house & showed me all his establishment which is the most interesting sight I ever saw, & I regretted at the time that Sophia & you were not along with me. His manufactory of cotton yarn is carried on with great neatness, the cotton wool is taken in its raw state

⁷² *The Post Office Annual Directory from Whitsunday 1819 to Whitsunday 1820 ... Edinburgh*, Edinburgh, 1819, lists 68 George Street as the home of Dr Robert Hogg, surgeon. The *Edinburgh Medical and Surgical Journal*, 13 (1817), recorded that the degree of Doctor of Medicine was conferred on one Robert Hogg on 1 August that year, his inaugural dissertation being entitled 'De Ictero'.

⁷³ Although the wording of this sentence suggests otherwise, Hamilton Palace was located near the town of Hamilton, Lanarkshire. Now demolished, it was the main residence of Alexander Hamilton (1767-1852), 10th duke of Hamilton.

⁷⁴ Robert Owen (1771-1858), a textile manufacturer and social reformer who managed and co-owned the New Lanark cotton mills and associated settlement.

from the low storey of the mill, carried to the top of the house & brought down to an adjoining room where it started from, made up into bundles of yarn ready to be sent to Germany, & as much yarn is manufactured by Mr Owen every day as would go two times & a half round the world; but by far the most curious & interesting sight about Mr Owens place is the establishment for the children – he takes charge of all the children of his labourers from the time they are two years of age until they are at ten & educates them, & then they are sent into the mill to labour, or they may leave the place if they choose – I saw 500 children together; they are taught to read after the Lancastrian method,^[75] arithmetic, writing, singing, dancing & the girls sewing at the expense of 3/- each per annum. The children were all nice & clean & merry; Mr Owen neither rewards nor punishes any of the children & yet neither quarrelling nor fighting is known among them & I did not see one sulky face in the establishment they are uniformly attentive to their studies, & if I were to judge of their proficiency in general from the specimen of dancing that I saw, I should say they were highly accomplished by the time they reacht [*sic*] [*illegible*]. A gentleman was with me who had just come from Paris, & he assured me that a great many of the children without a shoe or stocking danced with as much elegance as the performers of the opera; they all danced quadrilles & every variety of figured dance.

I am very well pleased with your writing & if you continue to write strong & round there is no fear of your hand I am glad you are not at the bottom of any of your classes; I can hardly expect you to be at the top because there are some young ladies older than yourself, however persevere & make yourself quite master of your lessons & there is less matter as to the place you may occupy.

Agnes is quite well in health, but I do not think she has improved in her manners; her mother has begun her to read & she thinks she will have less trouble with her, than what she had to teach Sophia or you. Mr & Mrs McKean^[76] spent some days here last week, they are both quite well; they have renounced the lease of Challock & are to leave at Whits^[77] next, they have some idea of going to Machermore.^[78] Mrs McKerlie has been seriously ill but she is recovered & going about again, the Captain is quite well & also all your friends at Cairnsmoor – Mr Smiths family are quite well Miss Smith is still in Yorkshire & it may probably be a month before you see her at Ambleside on her way home, we understand that Mr Scambler the surgeon is dead lately and that Mr F. Smith has returned to Ambleside in consequence of that event; we all wish

⁷⁵ Named after the educationist Joseph Lancaster, the method involved, among other things, more advanced students helping the teacher to instruct less advanced students.

⁷⁶ Jane Ravenscroft and her husband William McKean (Note 39).

⁷⁷ Whitsunday (15 May), one of two traditional Scottish term days, when leases expired and started.

⁷⁸ A sixteenth-century castle in the parish of Minnigaff, Kirkcudbrightshire.

he may succeed in business.^[79] Mr Jeffrey^[80] is to be married in the course of a few weeks to Miss Thomson^[81] the daughter of the Member of Parliament, he is getting the house fitted up just now preparatory to the marriage Miss Brown of Enrick went down to the races at Dumfries she is not yet returned – I have lost sight of your chickens about; Big [*illegible*] has turned out to be a hen; the German has only reared two chickens & Sophias hen is still going about with her brood having been decidedly the most attentive mamma of the whole of them. I wrote a long letter to Sophia but an accident befel[!] it so that I could not forward it & it was put into the fire; your Mother sends her kind love & she begs you will assure Miss Dowling that she feels particularly obliged by her letter added on to your letter. I beg best regards to Miss Dowling also & I am

Your Affectionate Father
Alex Craig

11. FROM DUNLOP STEWART TO SOPHIA CRAIG

Cairnsmoor
4 November 1820

My Dear Sophia

I have every week delayed writing you always expecting your promised letter to your Grand mother; this pleasure however I despair of having until this may perhaps recal to your recollection that you have a few relatives at the foot of Cairnsmoor who would be much gratified by a little proof of your remembrance of them.

Grand mamma and Auntie Peggy left this ten days since for Dumfries they mean to visit your mothers intimate friend Mrs Dalzell; and on their return are to be with the Melvilles^[82] in Kirkcudbright for a few days and after that they

⁷⁹ His venture was evidently successful. He was listed in *Parson & White's Directory 1829* as a surgeon at Ambleside; and the 1841 Census had him as a surgeon in the Market Place.

⁸⁰ The Reverend Robert Jeffrey (1786-1844), minister of Girthon from 1818 until the Disruption of 1843, when he left the Church of Scotland and became the first minister of the Free Church of Scotland in Gatehouse.

⁸¹ Jessie (or Janet) Thomson (b. 1796), daughter of the Reverend James Thomson (1753-1825), minister of Balmaclellan from 1791 to 1825. The deaths of two of her sisters are referred to in Letter 42. It is unclear why Alexander Craig refers to her as the daughter of 'the Member of Parliament'.

⁸² *Pigot's Directory 1825-26* lists Alexander Melville Esq. of Barquhar under 'Nobility, Gentry &c.'. His residence is given as High Street, Kirkcudbright.

are to visit at Syllodioch; and then I expect them home, it is a very long time since mother has been so long absent or so far from home I flatter my self she will enjoy her own chair at her own fireside by the time this reaches you.

Your acquaintance Miss Boyd^[83] has gone to Edinburgh to attend [?Masters]; she is quite pleased as yet with the exchange she has made. Margaret Maitland^[84] continues so very delicate that I should question the probability of her ever being able for study of any kind, her friends talk of taking her to Edinburgh this winter to have medical advice.

Doctor and Mrs Stewart^[85] set out for Glasgow on Monday to remain the winter which I suspect will be the last season of school; Anne promises fair to be a fine girl Lillias how ever talks with most affection of your sister and you. We had a visit of Miss Joanna Baillie^[86] and her sister they have been staying at Hill with [?Miss] Hughan;^[87] we found them very agreeable indeed; they were in search of wild scenery my brother James and myself accompanied them to the grey Mares tail you know that fall of water is on James farm of Talnotrie;^[88] I should have said that Miss Joanna is the lady who wrote the plays upon the passions; she has also been visiting your Aunt and Uncle at Ruthwell and exceedingly pleased with all your friends there; they are at present with Sir Walter Scot [*sic*].^[89]

Your Uncle Keith has been confined with a sprained ancle [*sic*] he got when pursuing a hare he is somewhat recovered.

⁸³ Presumably one of the sisters of Benjamin Boyd (Note 71).

⁸⁴ Possibly Margaret Maitland (1805-1829). She was the daughter of the Reverend John Garlies Maitland (1766-1835), minister of Minnigaff from 1789 to 1835, and so a neighbour of James Stewart at Cairnsmoor.

⁸⁵ The Reverend Anthony Stewart M.D. (c.1767-1847), minister of Kirkcowan from 1799 to 1844. His wife was Grace Dickson. Their daughters Anne (1806-1899) and Lillias Miller (b.1808) are mentioned in the next sentence. The name Lillias Miller is a strong indication that they were part of the extended Miller/Stewart/Ravenscroft family.

⁸⁶ Joanna Baillie (1762-1851), poet and dramatist. Her three volumes of *Plays on the Passions* were published between 1798 and 1812.

⁸⁷ *The New Statistical Account of Scotland* IV (rev. 1844), 335: Kirkmabreck, Kirkcudbrightshire, recorded Hill House as the property of Thomas Hughan Esq., of Airs. It is described as a very substantial building with a front of polished granite, and as one of the four principal mansion houses of the parish. The very difficult handwriting of this correspondent makes it uncertain whether a Miss or Mrs Hughan is referred to here. Thomas is held to have had two sisters, Jane and Margaret, illegitimate offspring of his father.

⁸⁸ No trace remains of Talnotrie, a farm in the parish of Minnigaff. For a photograph of it, see Hunter, 2014, 32.

⁸⁹ Joanna Baillie and her sister were staying with her friend Sir Walter Scott (1731-1822) at Abbotsford, his house in Roxburghshire.

Mr McKean Challock spent yesterday here, Aunt Jane and he are quite well; and have made up their minds to quit Challock at Whitsunday next we hope they will take the old Castle of Machermore but that is not quite decided on yet, Captain McKerlie and Harriet are also [*page damaged, two lines*] they stay very close at home we [*page damaged, two lines*].

I am quite pleased to hear you get on so well; and would gladly hope you will make great progress in your different [*illegible*] and amply repay your parents for all their anxiety they have on your account. Say every thing that is kind from your Uncles and myself to Lillias tell her the chickens are thriving finely and a little kitten that lost its mother has been suckled by a greyhound and from that circumstance has become quite a pet in the family.

I shall be glad to hear from you or from Lillias; but should it be contrary to Miss Dowlings regulations to spare so much time for writing I shall most readily excuse you.

Should you think of it remember me very kindly to Miss Smith, she I believe is expected about this time.

Mrs M: Stewart has lately presented her husband with a daughter it is the eig[h]th all at home [*two or three illegible words*] Mrs Stewart yours ever my dear Sophia very sincerely

Dunlop Stewart

12. FROM LILLIAS CRAIG TO AGNES DUNCAN

Ambleside
23 November 1820

My Dear Agnes,

Sophia and I have made some pincushions and thread cases for you, and Miss Smith was so kind as to promise to take you them when she went home. I hope all the chickens are well, and that they are as tame as they were when I left them, and that the weasel has killed no more of them. Sophia and I are both very well, and we join in kind love to Papa, Mama, and all our friends.

I remain, my dear Agnes,
Your affectionate Sister,
Lillias Craig

13. FROM MISS DOWLING TO ANN CRAIG

Ambleside
1 December 1820

My dear Madam,

I avail myself of Miss Smith's going to Gatehouse, to enclose you my account, though in so doing, I rather anticipate, but I thought I might as such save the postage.

Whenever Mr Craig thinks proper to honour it, he will much oblige me by sending a bill upon London, addressed for me, "at Mr Dowling^[90] [?Seignor's], No. 6 Lyon's Inn,^[91] St Clements' Strand, London."

I fear you will think it extravagant that the young ladies have had duplicates of so many books, but it is necessary, because they may be very distant from each other in their classes, at the time that they may both want the books.

I need say nothing of their health &c, as I hope Miss Smith will be able to give you a satisfactory report on that head, but I have the pleasure to say that I think they are very good and industrious, and that they are improving very fast.

I beg my best respects to Mr Craig, and remain, my dear Madam,

Very Sincerely Yours
Dowling^[92]

14. FROM LILLIAS CRAIG TO ALEXANDER CRAIG

Ambleside
December 1820^[93]

My dear Papa,

I did not like to miss the opportunity of writing to you by Miss Smith, as she was so kind as to offer to take our letters. I have nothing to say, except that we hope we are getting on with our studies, and are each at the head of a class, and

⁹⁰ Vincent Dowling (1756-1825), father to the Miss Dowlings. See the Introduction: biographical notes.

⁹¹ Lyon's Inn was one of the Inns of Chancery, London.

⁹² For the suggestion that this is probably Eliza Dowling (1796-1870), see the Introduction: biographical notes.

⁹³ No day of the month is given although the letter was probably sent with Letter 13.

not low in any of them. We are both quite well, and join in kind love to Mama, Agnes, and all our friends, and I remain, my dear Papa,

Your dutiful, and
Affectionate daughter,
Lillias Craig

15. FROM ANN CRAIG TO SOPHIA AND LILLIAS CRAIG

Syllodioch
3 December 1820

My dearest children

I would have written to you sooner had I not been almost constantly engaged with company at home for the last month, and knowing you had heard from Aunt Dunlop and Aunt Agnes, and also that our esteemed friend Miss Smith had seen you, I fancied you would not be fretting to hear from me. I am happy to inform you that Papa, Agnes and myself are quite well; Grandmamma with Aunt Margaret left us last week, having taken the opportunity of paying us a visit on their way home from Dumfries where and in its neighbourhood and in Kirkcudbright they had been for three weeks, the old Lady and Margaret were both uncommonly well, I made your apology for not writing which they readily sustained, and I beg you will with my kind compliments to Miss Dowling, assure her that both with regard to writing and any other circumstance connected with your education I shall readily concur with her, in order to render as far as I possibly can the charge she has of you easy. I hope Miss D understood your father that it was our wish that she should consult her own judgement in providing for you whatever was necessary and proper, and should you need or desire any thing that I could get here I can easily send it by Whitehaven, therefore let me know your wishes during the x [*i.e.* Christmas] holidays, which period of your time will I doubt not be very happily spent.

We have had two visits of several days each time of your cousin William Young^[94] within the last month, he left us on Friday having been very successful in killing many hares and pheasants. Agnes conceived an amazing love for him, and cried nearly the whole forenoon after his chaise whirled from the door but she is now with the happy forgetfulness of childhood reconciled to his absence.

⁹⁴ William Young (1794-1872), later Young-Herries of Spottes (Note 106). See the Introduction: biographical notes.

I give her a lesson now and then and find her a very apt scholar, but she is far too much taken notice of and indulged, she talks incessantly of her two sisters at Ambleside, and threatens to complain to you when she is offended; you see of how much consequence you are become. Mr and Mrs Brown of Whitehaven were to leave Knockbrenn about this time, they have been in the country since the first of September. Mr Murray and Lady Ann have broke up their establishment at Cally and are gone to reside in France. The Cardoness^[95] children are recovering from the hooping cough which they have had very severely, you know Mrs Maxwell carried them in the way of infection while I anxiously avoided it with you till you ~~you~~ grew stronger and older. We often see Mr & Mrs Thomson of Castramont^[96] she is just going to wean her nice little boy. Mrs Hannay of Ruscoe^[97] is in better health since her London trip last summer, and all [?Mr] Smiths family are quite well.

Miss Bell^[98] the old Lady you will remember seeing both here and in Dumfries, was so kind as [to] take Barbara Ann^[99] (who is attending Mrs Bushbys^[100] school) to see my Mother, who tells me she is looking very well indeed, and she never heard her give one cough. The Captain and Aunt Kerlie^[101] are finely so are your Challock friends and we are all talking and thinking of you with great kindness.

Papa and Agnes join in affectionate love to you both with your fond anxious Mother whose constant prayer to God is, that every thing good may attend you both my dear dear children

Ann C

⁹⁵ David Maxwell II (d. 1825) became 1st baronet of Cardoness in 1804. The *Gatehouse Folk website* has a page entitled 'A Brief History of Cardoness Ownership' that includes an image of the original house.

⁹⁶ Mr and Mrs Thomson have not been identified.

⁹⁷ A late fifteenth-century tower house in the parish of Anwoth, Kirkcudbrightshire. *Pigot's Directory 1825-26* lists Robert Hannay (1760-1836) as its resident.

⁹⁸ Not identified. Possibly the same person as mentioned in Letters 35 and 66.

⁹⁹ Barbara Ann Duncan (1810-1901), daughter of the Reverend Henry Duncan and Agnes Craig. All subsequent references to Barbara (Ann) in the letters are to this individual.

¹⁰⁰ *Pigot's Directory 1825-26* lists a Mrs Bushby as having a Ladies' Academy at 24 Castle Street, Dumfries.

¹⁰¹ The omission of the 'Mc' is presumably accidental.

16. FROM ANN CRAIG TO SOPHIA AND LILLIAS CRAIG

Syllodioch
1 January 1821

Many very many happy new years to you both my darling children, I hope you have not been anxious at not hearing often from us of late; papa has been very busy, and Mamma sadly distracted with violent toothache a complaint (to any excess at least) nearly new to me, indeed though much better today, I still suffer so much that I can hardly find patience to write to you.

Your father, who has left me to day for Cally where he is collecting rents, was as well as myself highly gratified by Miss Smiths account of you both and also by Miss Dowlings, I trust you will continue to merit the same favours she reports, nothing in this world can add so much to the happiness of your parents as to hear of your well being and well doing. Your Papa wrote to Miss D= in London and in his letter begged she would procure you any cloaths you might stand in need of, by which we meant upper garments such as bonnet, coat, or frock, under cloaths I can cause Dunmore^[102] to make in her spare time, and I intend to set to work with nightshifts of which you had only two and will certainly require them at Midsummer if not sooner, but we can easily transmit them to you by Whitehaven when ever you need them, beg Miss E Dowling to be so obliging as measure the proper length of a nightshift body and sleeve; also the proper length of a petticoat [*interlined*: for each of you], I can allow for necks, and have them ready to fit the waists when you come home. I can also have the skirts of new cambrick [*sic*] muslin frocks ready, for I do not expect much work will be done in the family during your residence, you can answer this part of my letter the first time you write. I observe there is no charge for postages in Miss Dowlings bill, from which I infer you pay your own, and since I find my little girls put their pocket money to so sensible a use I should be sorry you were to run out, therefore tell me when you want more.

Agnes was highly delighted with your gifts which are displayed to every body, her health is good, but I am sorry to say from over indulgence she does not improve as I could wish, she is far too much the plaything of every body; did I tell you I had begun her to read and find her extremely clever. Papa goes into Edinburgh this day week, when I have promised to pay a visit at Mr Smiths and take her with me. Mr Jeffrey was married last Tuesday week to Miss Jessy Thomson; the Sunday before I received a letter from [*interlined*: him] requesting I would come to the manse on the evening of that day and receive his bride (your Papa was at Cairnsmoor). I went accordingly, and have seldom met with a young creature that pleased and interested more than what she has done; we

¹⁰² Ann Craig's maid. See also Letters 18, 19 and 25.

called on Sunday morning to take them to church where I matronised^[103] her, your Papa driving us himself. Mrs Jeffrey is very young, tall, fair, pretty, and in manner gentle and altogether extreme[ly] genteel, being perfectly free from affectation of any sort.

There was a letter from Uncle James yesterday. Keith who had been dangerously ill of inflammation and Aunt Margaret also of the same complaint are nearly well, all your other friends are perfectly so, and had been keeping Xmas at Cairnsmoor. I have not heard from Ruthwell very lately but believe they are all well, George John is in Edinburgh this winter. Your friend Miss Brown of Enrick has burnt her foot and is confined to the house. Miss Birtwhistle is still at Mr Smiths. I do not hear any thing in the neighbourhood that can interest you, except the death of poor Carberry McLean,^[104] who in his capacity of gamekeeper was walking with a loaded pistol in his pocket which exploded on his going over a dike and lodged the contents in his thigh, the accident happened on thursday he died on the Monday following.

Make my best compliments acceptable to Miss E Dowling, Agnes joins in much love to you both

Your truly affectionate Mother
A Craig

17. FROM DOWLING TO ALEXANDER CRAIG

London
3 January 1821

My dear Sir,

Owing to my having been out of town, I did not receive your letter, containing a draft upon Messrs Coutts and Co. for sixty five pounds, nineteen shillings, until this morning, or I should certainly have acknowledged it before. Accept my thanks for your considerate attention to my wishes, and I am very glad that there was no expense incurred during the last half year that did not meet your approbation. I have every reason to believe your little girls will be everything you wish, for they evince a rationality above their years, and as I have them at an age, at which it is possible to lay the foundations of a sound education, and

¹⁰³ To 'matronise' is to chaperone someone, in this instance a new bride on her first appearance at church after marriage.

¹⁰⁴ See also *Glasgow Herald* 1 January 1821, which added the detail that the gun was loaded with grapeshot and stated that McClean died on the Tuesday.

am, I think likely ~~likely~~ to retain them until I can satisfactorily complete it, I have no doubt of amply fulfilling your wishes and my own I will attend to Mrs Craig's directions respecting their equipment for Midsummer, and with my best respects to her

I remain dear Sir
Your Obliged & Obedient Servant,
Dowling

18. FROM ANN CRAIG TO SOPHIA AND LILLIAS CRAIG

Syllodioch
9 February 1821

My dear children –

I have put off writing for some days in expectation of your monthly letter, but shall now no longer defer letting you hear from home. We are in our usual health, nor have I had any attacks of toothache for some time, Agnes grows very fast, I wish I could add that she is improving other ways, but she continues to love her own will, and is really pretty expert in continuing to obtain it; she retains the greatest affection for you both, and often enquires when June will be here. Your Papa rode down to Spotts^[105] last Wednesday to see our friend Mr Herries^[106] who is in a feeble or rather precocious state of health, I expect him home to dinner, when he was in Edinburgh a fortnight ago he saw all your friends, and cousin Susan is in good health and great beauty, I caused her to chuse [*i.e.* choose] 6 pair of cotton stockings for each of you, (you know they are not to be had here of a decent quality) and should you need them or any other undercloaths before June let me know, and I shall send them to you by the way of Whitehaven.

I am sorry to inform you that Aunt Margaret was taken suddenly ill at Benfield^[107] about a fortnight ago, her disorder turned out to be a bilious fever

¹⁰⁵ A property in the parish of Urr, Kirkcudbrightshire, more usually spelled Spottes.

¹⁰⁶ More correctly Herries. In 1799 the property was in the possession of one Michael Herries, who executed a deed of entail in favour of William Young, son of Alexander Young of Harburn. On inheriting the property, William assumed the Herries name, becoming known as William Young-Herries of Spottes. See McKerlie, P. H. *A History of the Lands and their Owners in Galloway*, 5 vols, Edinburgh, 1870-1879, V, 304-305.

¹⁰⁷ A property in the parish of Penninghame. At this time it was part of the Marton Hall estate, and in the possession of the family of Edward Boyd Esq.

of which she is now slowly recovering; Uncle Keith has been ill for a good while past, and I am greatly alarmed at his present state he is extremely reduced, the fine stout young man being little more than a shadow of what he was; by a letter from Dunlop of tuesday last, he had agreed to go into Edinburgh in order to obtain the best advice, I trust he will not postpone till too late.

Grandmamma and all the rest of the family are quite well, Captain McKerlie has given up Benfield and is at present undetermined where he shall hoist his flag he wavers between Bath and Edinburgh. Aunt Harriet is pretty well but never stout.

With respect to our immediate [*interlined*: neighbours] I have seen most of them lately, all hearty, and never forgetting my two dear little girls. Mr Smiths family are quite well, Miss Birtwhistle left them this day week. I dined at Ruscoe last Tuesday, Mrs Hannay better than her usual, the laird finely, George and Robert^[108] were at home and are very promising boys indeed.

Your father was at Ruthwell on his way from Edinburgh and left your Aunt well. George John he saw when in town. Barbara Ann is close in Dumfries and improving rapidly you know she is both clever and industrious.

We have the finest weather possible everything bears the mark of Spring we fear a check ere long.

Mr & Mrs Thomson Mure left Knockbrenn ten days ago for Edinburgh, where they intend spending two months during the festive season, the death of Mr Samuel his idiot brother has no doubt proved a great relief to them both in many ways.

Report says I am to lose my maid Dunmore at the term if not sooner, she is said to be married to our former servant Peter who is now gardener at Barwhinnock.^[109] I am sorry to lose her services for tho' unsteady in her temper, she is neat handed and very honest both in word and deed.

We heard from York the other day poor Anne Vicars^[110] is again ill, I greatly fear she is not long for this world, tho' Mr Vicars does not write hopelessly, the rest of the family were well. I trust we shall very soon have the comfort of hearing either from one of you or Miss Dowling, to whom pray make our kind regards acceptable, and believe me my dearest children

Your most affectionate Mother
Ann Craig

¹⁰⁸ George Kerr Hannay (1808-1887) and Robert Kerr Hannay (1807-1884).

¹⁰⁹ A property in the parish of Twynholm, Kirkcudbrightshire, inhabited by Patrick Laurie McMillan (c.1782-1848).

¹¹⁰ Ann Howard Vicars (b. 1805), the daughter of the Reverend Matthew Vicars and Harriot Atchinson.

19. FROM ALEXANDER CRAIG TO SOPHIA CRAIG

Cally
7 March 1821

My Dear Sophia –

Your Uncle Keith has been very ill & confined to bed for sometime, by a species of consumption which the doctors call diabetes; it is a disease the causes of which are involved in great obscurity, & therefore very seldom cured, but as your Uncle is now considerably better, & able in good weather to walk round the garden without assistance, I would gladly hope his case will prove an exception to the usual fate of those seized with diabetes.

Your Aunt Margaret was taken suddenly ill while on a visit at Benfield; she is happily now almost well again. Your Mother was obliged to go to Cairnsmoor to take charge of the family, & was there upwards of a fortnight, during which time Agnes & I kept house at home, & I then succeeded in getting her to abandon her trick of nipping & sucking, but no sooner had your mother returned, than Agnes began with redoubled eagerness to the neck & when you return at Midsummer I fear you will find Agnes not improved in her temper or demeanour; she is however making some progress in reading, and promises to learn quickly, but lacks greatly of application, as she enjoys more pleasure in running after Robin, a tame sheep which goes along with the cows, than in reading her book.

Lillias' letter arrived during your Mothers absence, I was very glad to learn that ~~you~~ both of you were well & happy, & I trust your next letter will bring us the same welcome intelligence; she stated no particulars about your classes, or what places you hold in each, which be so good as mention in your next.

I desired Miss Dowling if she thought proper, to begin you & Lillias with music; I am afraid you will not be great proficient in that science, but at any rate it will strengthen the habit of application, which often is the only thing wanting to enable almost every person to surmount every difficulty.

Lillias mentions that you had plenty of snow drops & primroses in full blow; I think she has committed a mistake & written primroses in place of crocus' [*sic*], at least we have had plenty of snow drops & crocus' for more than a month past, but I have not observed any primroses, & I think we should be fully as early here as you are amongst the mountains; the daffodils are just beginning to burst below the window; John^[111] has not touched your flower garden, but I hope you will find it in great beauty on your return at Midsummer.

I was in Dumfries shire [*sic*] last week, & spent two nights at Ruthwell. Your friends there are quite well; Mr Duncan has knocked down the barn &

¹¹¹ Presumably a servant or farmworker.

[?conver]ted the place where it stood into a piece of shrubbery. It is probable that your two little cousins the Murrays^[112] will be sent to Miss Dowling after the holidays, if she can then find room for them, but the arrangements regarding them are not yet finally adjusted.

I am obliged to go to Donegal in the end of this month, where I shall be detained a few weeks, but I shall expect to have a letter from you before I leave home, & you will only have to write another one before the holidays come round.^[113]

Your maid Dunmore is going to leave us next term – report says she is going to be married to Peter who is now gardener at Barwhinnock. If you should see Mr Smith you can say that all his friends here are quite well. I expect some of them to dine here tomorrow. Mr Birkett has built a ship at Gatehouse,^[114] which is to be launched tomorrow & as it is the first ever built there a great crowd is expected to witness her coming off the stocks.

You may tell Lillias that her chickens are all thriving at last. I observe great lots of them going about, but they have grown out of my acquaintance & it is likely she may not on her return be able to recognize her old acquaintances.

Your mother gives me her kindest love to you & your Sister and I remain
My Dear Sophia

Your Affectionate Father
Alex Craig

[*illegible*] regards acceptable to the Miss Dowlings –

20. FROM ANN CRAIG TO SOPHIA AND LILLIAS CRAIG

Syllodioch
20 April 1821

My very dear children

I have delayed so long writing to you because I knew your Uncle Henry could tell you we were all well. Your dear Aunt writes us that he was much pleased with what he saw and heard of you both and I need hardly add such good accounts of you afforded your father and myself the most sincere pleasure.

¹¹² Probably to be identified as Susan Catherine Murray (1810–1891) and Catherine Agnes Murray (1811–1899), who are referred to as Susan and Agnes in this correspondence. See the Introduction: biographical notes.

¹¹³ The remainder of the letter was cross-written over the first page.

¹¹⁴ For Birkett and his ship, see Note 40.

We are now begun to number the weeks that must yet intervene before the holidays commence, and if all goes on well I do not intend to write to either of you till after our next separation I therefore think it right to mention that in my opinion with the exception of one decent frock for each of you, and your best bonnet and spencer,^[115] it is quite needless to bring any cloaths home but those that are out grown and worn out and I should suppose one trunk would [*interlined*: hold] the good articles above mentioned and all your rubbish also.

You can offer my kind and respectful compliments to Miss Dowling and let her know what I have said; you will find an abundant supply of under garments already provided for you, with several frocks ready to fit the waists when we see your size. Your Papa will write to Miss Dowling between [now] and the vacation settling the manner in which he wishes you to travel. I have the happiness to inform you that Uncle Keith is thank God most wonderfully recovered, and we have reason to hope for his perfect restoration to health.

James was here last week when all friends up the country were in good case, even Aunt Margaret was got pretty stout and was visiting about. We have some intention of going as far as Cairnsmoor on Sunday on our way to Benfield in order to see Aunt Harriet before she removes to a greater distance as neither she nor I go much from home our chance of meeting will neither be soon nor frequent when she settles at Stranraer^[116] which place she has preferred to Edinburgh where the Captain wished to establish himself when I last wrote to you. Agnes is quite healthy and grows fast, she is constantly speaking of your return and all the pleasures that are mutually in store for you. There was a letter from Mr Vicars about a week since poor Anne still lingered but I fear there is no chance of her recovery.

I trust [my] dear children you are kind to your little cousins,^[117] who I hope are well and meriting Miss Dowlings approbation. I would send my love to them did I think they could recollect me. We have had for the last five or six weeks dismal wet weather, the labour of the farmers is almost at a stand, nevertheless the country here about begins to look pretty when by chance the sun shines. I do not think of any news that would interest you.

Your father and sister join me in love to you both and in assuring you that the middle of June is longed for as much by us as it possibly can be by you.

Believe me my dear Girls your affectionate Mother
Ann Craig

¹¹⁵ A short, close-fitting coat with long sleeves.

¹¹⁶ It is uncertain whether Aunt Harriet and Captain McKerlie ever set up home in Stranraer. *Pigot's Directory 1825-26* lists them as living at Corvisel House, Newton Stewart, a villa built by McKerlie c.1830.

¹¹⁷ The Murray 'cousins' (Note 112).

21. FROM ALEXANDER CRAIG TO SOPHIA CRAIG

Cally
29 May 1821

My Dear Sophia

Lillias and you will now be numbering the days which must intervene previous to the breaking up of the school. As your mother and I intend to bring you home during the ensuing holidays, it will be necessary to make some arrangement for your journey. In the event of Mr Duncan taking the two little Murrays home it occurs to me that you might all four, easily pack into one chaise, and accomplish the journey from Ambleside to Ruthwell or Murraythwaite^[118] in a day, where it is likely your mother and I may meet you, as we have some intention of paying a visit to our friends in that neighbourhood in the course of a few weeks. In case the Miss Murrays remain at Ambleside during the holidays you must find your way to Carlisle by some of the public coaches, & proceed from there to Gatehouse in the Mail, unless some of your schoolfellows should travel in that direction, when you might make up a party in a chaise to Carlisle.

The London Mail reaches Carlisle soon after one oClock & leaves it about two, it will be necessary therefore for you, in order to prevent your being detained a day between Ambleside & Carlisle, to arrange so as to arrive at Carlisle by one oClock when you will come straight on in the Mail which reaches Gatehouse at one in the morning; the distance from Ambleside to Gatehouse is about 112 miles, & tho' it is a long journey for Lillias & you, yet I have no doubt the buoyancy of your spirits on the occasion will enable you to overcome the fatigue. If none of your schoolfellows travel towards the North, you will have to come by one of the coaches, & I fear spend near 24 hours either at Penrith or Carlisle at an inn, which will not be pleasant but it cannot be helped. Write to me & let me know when the school breaks up & the day on which you will leave Ambleside & I shall write to you again with particular directions as to your journey.

Your mother & Agnes are quite [*interlined*: well]. Your Uncle James & Keith are both here just now the latter is greatly better but I am not sanguine as to his ultimate recovery. Margaret is far from well but all the rest of your friends enjoy good health. Mr James Murray^[119] died at Florence on the 3rd

¹¹⁸ A country house and estate in the parish of Cummertrees, Dumfriesshire. It was the home of the Murray 'cousins'. See the Introduction: biographical notes.

¹¹⁹ James Wentworth Murray (1796-1821), the brother of Alexander Murray of Broughton. The *Edinburgh Annual Register* for 1821 recorded his death at Florence in the twenty-fifth year of his age.

inst.^[120] Mr Murray has arrived at London & is expected here about the time we look for Lillias & you.

Your Mother & I beg our kind regards to the Miss Dowlings & I remain

Your Affectionate Father
Alex Craig

22. FROM ANN CRAIG TO SOPHIA CRAIG

Syllodioch
9 August 1821

I duly received your letter my dear Sophia and truly rejoice to hear that Lillias and you are so well. Your Papa reached home by the Mail on Saturday morning having called for Miss Dowling but neither she nor the ladies she visited were at home. I trust she is by this time established at the head of her large family and in the enjoyment of better health than before the commencement of her holidays; let me remind you my dear children that every human being particularly if in delicate health is sensible of attention therefore be as quiet and gentle in your motions and deportment as possible, and strive to avoid fretting her by neglect of your studies or finding difficulties in your lessons.

Agnes cried very bitterly for about an hour after you left her, she then cheered up till the return of Mary renewed her lamentation of I hae na pleasure noo,^[121] she still speaks of you and wishes you back, but the infant mind has a blessed facility of reconciling itself to circumstances. Your Papa has been very busy all this week, I am however hopeful his Edinburgh journey is postponed. We heard the other day from Ruthwell Aunt Agnes was gone to the sea side with Barbara and little Willie Stewart,^[122] and Uncle Henry expected to be at Ambleside in the course of ten days, you can then ask him yourself what his christmas plans are for your cousins but I daresay he will not begin to form them for some time to come so you must have a little patience.

I have this morning a letter from Captain McKerlie containing the pleasing intelligence that Harriet has a daughter^[123] on tuesday; both Grandmama and Aunt Margaret are with her, the latter I am sorry to say still continues very delicate. I have not heard from Cairnsmoor since your departure nor do I think

¹²⁰ *i.e.* 3 May.

¹²¹ Scots for I have no pleasure now.

¹²² Not identified. Perhaps a pupil at Ruthwell.

¹²³ Lillias Millar McKerlie had been born on 7 August 1821.

of being there soon since Papa remains at home. I have been no where out of the enclosure since you left me, except to church, when I called upon Mr Jeffrey whose arm continues to do well, but the doctors had not permitted him to move from his bed he was to lie the three weeks, while poor Tom Neales^[124] son broke his arm in a much worse place on Wednesday week, and Mr [*page damaged: ?Rae*]^[125] never desired him to lie down, and I understand he is doing well. Mr Smiths family were quite well last Sunday and I said what is not correct when I told you I had been no where from home, as I called at Knockbrenn on tuesday. Mrs Mure was most kind in her mention of you both, and Mrs Browns little boy is as well as possible. Miss Brown of Enrick was here yesterday and begg[ed] her love [to] you, and Mrs Robson called some days since to enquire after your passage by sea as she took fright and could not allow her son and Mr Grey to go that day after every thing was packed up and the gig at the door to convey them to the fish house.^[126]

Let Lillias know the whole of her cocks hens and chickens are well, notwithstanding wet disagreeable weather nor has a single incident occurred in the neighbourhood that I think would amuse you. I assure you I feel very dull for want of you but I endeavour to submit patiently since it is for your advantage. I hope soon to hear that the tenderness of feeling which home called forth is healed up in you, and I was well pleased to see that Betty had resolution to conquer hers. Offer your father[’s] and my kind and respectful compliments to the Miss Dowlings, I hope at some period of my life to be personally known to them. We send our love to your cousins, and Agnes a thousand kisses to you both, and thanks for your parcel.

Believe me my darling children
your affectionate Mother
Anne Craig

¹²⁴ Tom Neale, Mrs Robson and Mr Grey have not been identified.

¹²⁵ *Pigot’s Directory 1825-26* lists Nelson Rae under ‘Surgeons’. His premises were in Front Street, Gatehouse. See also Letters 64, 76, 78 and 80.

¹²⁶ The Fish House was a building at Tongland which functioned as a preparation and packing facility for fish, prior to their dispatch by horse and cart to customers. A post on the Kirkcudbright History Society [website](#), ‘Tongland Abbey and Tongland Fish House – a Tale of Two Ruins’ (2017), proposes that the building dates from c.1825. As this letter shows, however, it was clearly in operation by 1821.

23. FROM ANNE CRAIG TO SOPHIA CRAIG

Syllodioch
9 August 1821

I duly received your letter my very dear Sophia and both your father and myself were well pleased with the improvement it evinced and the accounts it contained of the good health of your sister and yourself. We have heard from Uncle Henry but he has not said that he either approves of your cousins leaving school at the xmas vacation or intends sending their Uncles chaise to meet them at Wigton and you will recollect it was only on that supposition that I ever entertained the idea of risking your health by so long a journey in the depth of winter to say nothing of the heavy sickness you endure in travelling, when the holidays are too short to admit of more than a feverish enjoyment; you must therefore endeavour to think as little of home as you possibly can, and should circumstances enable us to meet in the manner above proposed, of which I am very doubtful, our enjoyment will be rather increased by our not having anticipated too much. I hope Miss Dowlings health is begun to improve as Mr Smith told me he had seen her out; he reached home last friday and brought Agnes her letter, who having got it with the seal unbroken was exceeding vain she is in good case and grows fast but is too much indulged a misfortune an only child generally labours under, she sends dear love to you both, but I cannot praise her kindness to Lills chickens, as tho' she feeds she handles also, and that has caused the death of a very pretty speckled one last night. I do not think I have seen Topy twice since your departure, the favourable change of the weather enabling the wild birds to feed themselves, our fields are beautiful beyond what I ever saw at this season, and the intense heat of last week being abated by a storm of thunder last saturday, the weather is very agreeable but we are still ill off for water no more rain having fallen than was needed for the ground both burns and springs are exceedingly low.

Having heard last sunday that Uncle Keith was very poorly, on monday evening your Papa drove Agnes and I up to Cairnsmoor where we had the comfort of finding him better than I had dared to hope, but very far from so well as when you saw him Grandmama had returned a few days before from Stranraer having left Aunt Harriet pretty stout, and little Lillias Miller very thriving, but a letter from Captain McKerlie announced that Harriet had given up nursing after her mother left her. Aunt Margaret continues far from strong being afflicted with constant bilious headache.

The new approach to Cairnsmoor is now open and I consider it very beautiful. We went upon tuesday and dined and drank tea at Machermore, the improvements there are nearly finished but I never can consider the castle either a comfortable or convenient dwelling however if it please the inmates that is more materiel [*i.e.* material], your Aunt and Uncle were both quite well and

begged their kind regards to you both. Your Father had a letter last week from Mr Young mentioning that he intended with some of his family being very soon at Ambleside on a visit to Colonel Campbell^[127] you will therefore see them in the course of the season. Your Papa has at present some thoughts of being in Edinburgh very shortly in which case Mr Young will not leave home for the Lakes till after his visit is paid. When I parted with my friends yesterday morning they wished me to promise to return when Papa went to Edinburgh, I did not however promise. Uncle James and Dunlop are finely, she brought out all her finery and excited the envy of dear Agnes not a little, to the amusement of the family more than the benefit of her temper but she held up a pair of new coloured shoes I I [*sic*] had given her saying you have nothing half so pretty as those and continued to console herself with that idea in spite of all the fine things that were shown her.

Mr & Mrs Thomson Mure are at present in Whitehaven to visit Mr & Mrs Brown previous to their removal to Liverpool if you children come and go by Whitehaven you will with good reason miss such kind hospitable friends as Mr & Mrs Brown have always proved to you. I saw Mr Smiths family on Sunday they are well; the young ladies are in no ways resolved to go to their brother, their motions greatly depending upon Mr Gordon of Kenmore.^[128] Mr Jeffrey is better but not able to preach because he cannot yet put his coat on. I hope to hear regularly from you once a month when you are both quite well, but oftener should anything ail either of you, and when ever I have any thing agreeable to communicate you may depend upon hearing from me. I have not heard of typhus fever in our immediate neighbourhood but the small pox rages at Gatehouse and I fear the fever will not subside without paying us a visit when within eight miles of us. Miss Brown Enrick is quite well. Mr Brown has been constantly from home I have only seen him once (since you came home first for the holidays) which was last Saturday and I believe he is off again.

Give my dear love and a kiss to my dear wee Lillias. I hope to hear from her when she can write with ease, but I will wait till then being satisfied you are both doing your best. I beg my best wishes to Miss Dowlings [*sic*] and am my dear Girls your affectionate Mother

A Craig

¹²⁷ Lieutenant-colonel Archibald Campbell (1769-1843). For a period he rented Allan Bank, Grasmere, Cumbria, the former home of the poet William Wordsworth and his family.

¹²⁸ The Gordon family of Kenmore (or Kenmure) lost its peerage title because of its support for the Jacobites in the rebellion of 1715. The John Gordon (1750-1840) referred to here managed to have the title restored in 1824 and thus became the actual 7th Viscount Kenmore, though 10th by courtesy.

24. FROM ALEXANDER CRAIG TO SOPHIA CRAIG

Syllodioch
1 October 1821

My dear Sophia –

I meant to have written to you long ere now, but one thing after another came in the way to prevent me it is of the less consequence however as I understand your Mother has written repeatedly to you since your return to school and thereby made amends for my silence.

I have been from home for the last three weeks, I was in Edinburgh two days, but the remainder of the time I spent at Harburn, your friends there were quite well, & there is a chance of your seeing some of them in the course of two or three weeks, as they talked of paying a visit to Colonel Campbell at Allanbank – Susan Hogg was very well & sent her kind love to you & Lillias.

I am not surprised that you found the tasks in Miss Dowlings class more difficult to learn, than what you had anticipated; a little pains & attention however are only wanting to overcome the difficulty, neither is it to be wondered at that you should stand at the bottom of some of the classes, since you have to contend with young ladies superior to you in years; against another year however I shall expect to learn that you have moved up to near the top, but it is of little consequence where your station may be, provided you are always master of your lessons and thoroughly understand how to apply them properly. In writing French Exercises you will find the Table of Verbs of considerable use, by enabling you to discover at once the tense, or person wanted, but I am not sure if it be advisable for you to have always recourse to the Table, you ought to think & reflect on what you learn, in which case you will soon discern, intuitively as it were, the correct mode of writing out your exercises.

Colonel Murray^[129] has been staying in the neighbourhood for some weeks for the benefit of sea bathing and I understand he will remain some weeks longer. I do not believe there is the least chance of Mr Duncan's bringing ~~them~~ [*interlined*: his daughters] home during the Christmas holidays & I think it would be a hazardous experiment for Lillias & you to travel so far at that season, to make amends however you shall have your choice to return at midsummer either by Carlisle or Whitehaven, & if you prefer the latter I shall send over Captain [?Bobby] & the Ranger^[130] on purpose to bring you home. The vast

¹²⁹ Lieutenant-colonel John Murray of Tundergarth (1775-1822). See the Introduction: biographical notes.

¹³⁰ This possibly refers to a two-masted schooner called *Ranger*, built in 1807 and registered at Kirkcudbright in 1823. At the time of its being wrecked in October 1826, however, its master was one John McLean. It was owned by the executors and trustees of the late earl of

quantity of bile that you got rid of on your voyage will I have no doubt superseded your having had recourse as yet either to salts or senna.

Your Grandmama & friends at Cairnsmoor are in their usual health excepting Keith, who had been very ill, but he was so far recovered as to go to Galloway House^[131] to be present at the celebration of Lord Garlies^[132] coming of age, and we have not heard how he stood the fatigue of that gala. Mr Smiths family are all well & Mr Jeffrey preached yesterday for the first time since he got his arm brok[en].

The weather for the last three weeks has been very unfavourable for the harvest, the corn that has been cut is growing & the top of the stooks getting quite green, & the violent gales of wind have shaken a great deal of the corn not yet cut down, so that the prospect of the farmers in Galloway is very gloomy. About Edinburgh the farmers are more fortunate as the crop was all in the barn yard before I left that part of the country & the crop far better than any they have had for many years past.

Agnes is running about as usual, since “Frank”^[133] was put into her hand she has conquered her repugnance to reading, & is now eager to learn her lessons & can repeat by heart all that she reads & her desire to hear Miss Edgeworths stories read is so great that she importunes every body to read them over to her, I hope therefore that she will turn out a good scholar.

When I was at Harburn Mr Young had a letter from his daughter Mrs Shortt^[134] from St Helena – she has got some of Buonapartes hair and she means to bring over with her some slips of the willow under which he is buried, so that you will see some of the relics of the ex-emperor. Dr & Mrs Shortt are expected in this country about New years day & possibly you may find a slip of Buonapartes willow in your garden on your return at Midsummer.

I was vexed to observe from Lillias letter that she had begun to despair of gaining a prize, she should keep up her spirits & persevere otherwise there is a risk of her fears being verified – I cannot give her any intelligence of her flock,

Selkirk. See Collin, D R. *Kirkcudbright Shipping 1300-2005*, Kirkcudbright, 2007. The identity of Captain Bobby, and the reason for Craig’s ability to contemplate sending him to collect his daughters, have not been ascertained.

¹³¹ On Wigtown Bay, adjacent to the village of Garlieston, Wigtownshire. It was built in the early 1740s for Alexander Stewart (c.1694-1773), Lord Garlies, later 6th earl of Galloway.

¹³² Randolph Algernon Ronald Stewart (1800-1873). He was Viscount Garlies from 1806 and became the 9th earl of Galloway upon the death of his father in 1834.

¹³³ ‘Frank’ was a truthful little boy who featured in several morally improving tales for children by Maria Edgeworth. He first appeared in her *Early Lessons* (1801) in such tales as ‘The Little Dog Trusty’ and made further appearances in subsequent collections.

¹³⁴ Henrietta Young (1796-1839). She married Dr Thomas Shortt (1788-1843), who had been one of the physicians attendant upon Napoleon on St Helena. See the Introduction: biographical notes.

but I suspect that I dined on one of them this day and I regret to say that I did not think it very capital.

I have sold the ches[t]nut poney & bought a black one, I have only rode it once so I cannot judge correctly of its merits, but I trust it will [*illegible*] better than some of its predecessors, it is the seventeenth steed that I have had since this time last year.

I was at Ruthwell on my return from Edinburgh and found all our friends there well. I expect Mr Duncan here soon to visit Colonel Murray. George John & Wallace^[135] are preparing to set out for Glasgow to attend the university there their father preferring Glasgow to Edinburgh as he conceives the professors at the latter place are become of late very negligent in attending to their students. I was very glad to get from Mrs Duncan so favourable accounts of your Sister & you and she seemed to think that the little Murrays were greatly improved also.

I hope Miss Dowling is now quite recovered present your Mothers kindest regards & mine to her & to her Sisters & I remain

My Dear Sophia
Your Affectionate Father
Alex Craig

25. FROM ANNE CRAIG TO SOPHIA AND LILLIAS CRAIG

Syllodioch
1 December 1821

My dearest children

It is now a long time since I have written to either of you. Your father should inform you that I went up to your Aunts marriage,^[136] and I remained at Cairnsmoor and the Castle^[137] three weeks; & since I came home I have been ill, but for the last week have got better, and am going about through the house, tho' I have not yet been out of doors, indeed the weather is so dismal there is no going out without being wet to the skin or risking that unpleasant occurrence. I have heard of your friends up the country since I left them, but I grieve to say there is no better accounts [*sic*] of your Uncle Keith, who is now reduced to great weakness; during my sojourn he only was once round the

¹³⁵ George John (Note 67) and his brother William Wallace (1808-1864), sons of the Reverend Henry Duncan. See the Introduction: biographical notes.

¹³⁶ Margaret Stewart (Note 63).

¹³⁷ *i.e.* Machermore.

grounds feeling walking ever so short a distance fatigue him greatly he sometimes rode out on horseback which exercise affected him less with weariness but he appears to be hopeless of his ever recovering and his spirits are very bad. I trust my dear Girls you and all of us may be be [*sic*] enabled to lay your Uncles state sensibly to heart he is a striking proof of how little youth strength and all the various advantages he possessed really are. Grandmama is very well a happy picture of old age though Keiths illness is a heavy affliction to her. Uncle James is finely, I hear no word of his taking [?Machermore]^[138] but when Dunlop marrys he will be obliged to do so in self defence. I left Mr McKean unwell but by a letter from Aunt Jean he is now recovered. I took Agnes with me she behaved very ill and was a great plague, she screamed and cried the morning of her Aunts wedding and would insist that Mr Wilson should leave Margaret and take Dunlop, who [*illegible*] amuses herself to assure her, and when we went to Machermore she declared proudly that she should like very well to live in a castle, but not with that Man meaning Mr McKean, from which you will observe she is not improving in polished manners, but I am happy to say she gets on tolerably with her reading, we are half through Frank and she likes and is amused with her lesson. I saw Dr Stewart^[139] who was asking kindly after you both. Anne and Lillias are quite well but their mother had been excessively ill, she is now convalescent. Your Papa heard from Mr Vicars lately, his family are all at present in their better way and the air of Devonshire appears to agree with them God grant it may continue to do so, they have still five children left.

I had a letter from Aunt Henry last week, they are all well at Ruthwell, George John and Wallace are still for the Winter in Glasgow, where I trust they will improve equal to the wishes of their excellent parents. Colonel Murray is still residing at the little cottage near us, of which however he is very tired, and I think it probable he will soon be returning to Murraythwait[e]. I trust his two little girls^[140] are well, and meeting the approbation of Miss Dowling which I feel sure you both are striving to obtain, and pray make my kindest compliments acceptable to Miss D and tell her how sincerely we rejoiced to hear of her recovery, and assure her that if she will during the xmas vacation write to me her real opinion of you both, I shall esteem myself much obliged to her, I know too well the constant labour to which her heavy charge subjects her to trouble her often for letters, two in the year will satisfy me. You know I made a promise to send some pheasants. I have not forgotten, but the great folk have sent me none since before I went to Cairnsmoor I therefore fear I shall not be able to

¹³⁸ The reading here is particularly uncertain, obscured by the cross-writing of this part of the letter.

¹³⁹ The Reverend Anthony Stewart (Note 85).

¹⁴⁰ Susan Catherine Murray and Catherine Agnes Murray (Note 112).

fulfil my promise to you, which however could be only conditional. I saw two of the Miss Smiths here the other day, and Papa was in Gatehouse yesterday and saw the whole family quite well. Mr Gordon of Kenmore proposes taking Ambleside on his way to London early in Spring and has offered one of the Miss S a seat in his carriage and I think it very likely one of them will go and visit their [brother] at that time; this will be an agreeable prospect for you as well as me who feel pleasure in the idea of such amiable friends seeing my dear children. Mr and Mrs Jeffrey are quite well, you will I hope get a morning at the manse when you return. Old Sir David Maxwell^[141] is become exceedingly frail and is now wheeled in a chair.

I intend going over to Cardoness the first fair day in order to pay my respects to Mr and Mrs Cunninghame of E[*illegible*] who I was surprised to learn had been there for a fortnight; the report of Sir Davids illness had brought them out of Ayrshire. Mr Thomson Mure is rather poorly this season he fell from his pony more than two months ago and has never recovered the effects of the fall, Mrs Mure is quite well so is Miss Brown Enrick. Mr John spent yesterday evening with us. By a letter from Mr Young to me a few days since I learn that Dr and Mrs Short[t] had not arrived from St Helena but were daily expected.

I hope to hear that you have both kept free of colds and that Sophias chilblains are not very [?terrible], pray do not neglect to wear leather gloves below the warm ones I gave you; and if Lill would like a pair of the same sort tell Miss D I shall be obliged by her procuring a pair and should you again take cold I think a flannel waistcoat next your skin might be of advantage during the winter; the cold must be more intense with you than here close upon the sea shore. Your Papa joins me in affectionate love to you both and to your cousins we also beg our kind regards to your two little friends with whom we are well acquainted I mean Tom and Julia^[142] and if you want any thing let us know; it will afford me pleasure to supply it being very truly your affectionate Mother

Anne Craig

Your Aunt Wilson has hired Dunmore and finds her an agreeable servant, you will be sorry to hear that Mrs Brodie^[143] is still so ill that no one expects she will out live this Winter.

P. S I greatly fear this letter will prove a complete puzzle you must however try and make it out as well as you can. Mary and Betty are here and well, Mary takes great care of your fowls though some do not thrive [?despite] all she can do.

¹⁴¹ David Maxwell of Cardoness (Note 95).

¹⁴² Neither have been identified.

¹⁴³ Not identified.

26. FROM LILLIAS CRAIG TO ANN CRAIG

Ambleside
8 December 1821

My dear Mama

We received your nice long letter a few days ago and we were very sorry to hear that you had been ill. I hope my Uncle Keith will be much better by the next time you write. We are both surprised to hear that Agnes can read so well we did not think she was so far forward. I have still five top places and I am second in a great many more. Neither of us have had colds for a long time and we are quite well. Sophia's chilblains are not at all trouble some. My Cousins join with us in best love to Papa, Agnes and all our friends. I remain My dear Mama

Your dutiful & affectionate Daughter
Lillias Craig

27. MISS DOWLING TO ALEXANDER CRAIG

London
2 January 1822

Dear Sir,

On my arrival here yesterday I had the pleasure of your letter and its enclosure, and am exceedingly obliged by your so kindly complying with my wish as to the form of your remittance, and also by your early attention.

I thank you for your correction of my account, in which you are quite right. The mistake was in the putting shillings and pence, instead of pounds and shillings.

I beg my best respects to Mrs Craig, and remain Dear Sir,

Very sincerely
Yours Dowling

I am happy to say I left your little girls perfectly well, and very much delighted in the anticipation of a Mask Ball they were going to,^[144] for which they were to make their own masks.

¹⁴⁴ The masked ball was in honour of Dora Wordsworth and her friend Jane Harden, on their leaving Miss Dowling's. For further details and an imaginative description of the ball, see Waldegrave, K. *The Poets' Daughters: Dora Wordsworth and Sara Coleridge*, London, 2013, chapter 5.

28. FROM ALEXANDER CRAIG TO LILLIAS CRAIG

Cally
3 February 1822

I have to congratulate you My Dear Lillias on your having obtained the prize, and been promoted to a higher class; these distinctions evince diligence & attention on your part and have afforded to your mother & myself a great deal of satisfaction. You must not however plume yourself on your success, lest you should become arrogant & idle, you must on the contrary redouble your diligence to support the character you have obtained, else it may [be] alleged that you have been more indebted to the partiality of your teacher than your own merit for the honour that has been conferred on you. You need not however despair tho' you should be less distinguished in your new class, because many of your competitors are greatly superior to you in years, but you may be always able to acquire, & thoroughly understand all your tasks, & when that is the case, it is not very material what particular station in the class is occupied by you.

You have not made the same proficiency in writing as your sister has done; it appears to me that you grasp the pen too firmly & by that means cramp your fingers, you should hold it loosely in your hand, which will give your fingers ease & freedom, for be it observed that it is your fingers that write, not the pen, which is merely a passive instrument wielded at their direction. You seem to have forgotten the instructions which I gave you as to the inclination or slope of our letters, which according to the opinion of some masters should form an angle of 54° with the bottom of the writing line, I used to draw two or three diagonal lines at that angle across each page of your copy to assist in forming your writing & I think it would be a good plan, if that were adopted for every beginner.

We were very glad to hear that your masked ball went off so well, & that you were all so happy on the occasion, your mother seemed to think the character of a poultry woman would have been more congenial to your feelings, & called up many agreeable associations than that of Betty Mouser;^[145] Agnes was much pleased with the characters that you sent her; she is grown very much since Midsummer, but has not made much progress in reading & she never goes to church as she still entertains the same horror at confinement that she used to do.

Your Uncle James came down on Friday & left us this forenoon, Keith is no better & there is little or rather no hope of his recovery, all the rest of your friends are well. Mr [or Mrs] & Miss Margaret Smith spent two days here last week she still talks of visiting Ambleside, but I think she will delay her visit till

¹⁴⁵ The reference is unclear. Perhaps a character in a children's rhyme or tale.

the approach of Summer, as she talks very feelingly on the subject of the cold she endured on the former visit she paid to her brother during winter.

I have no prospect, being in London during the ensuing Spring, it is likely that I may set out this day se'ennight^[146] for Rossshire; I was in Edinburgh about a fortnight ago, all your friends there are well; Mr Young^[147] is going to be married soon to the daughter of Sir James Saumarez; Susan Hogg was enquiring kindly after you, she is very well & as beautiful as ever.

When Mr Murray left this he sent down to your mother the contents of his poultry yard, among the number were two cocks, at whose intrusion Sir Reedie^[148] was so indignant, that he immediately gave them battle, & after many a hard fought battle he was like to come off second best, his head was terribly mauled & his wings trailed on the ground but your mother ordered one of his opponents to be killed; a truce has been patched up between the belligerents, Sir Reedie maintaining his sovereignty at the kitchen door, the other at the stable; the Malay cock,^[149] thinking that the better part of valour was discretion took no part in the fight & thereby saved himself a mauling. I observe above fifty hens walking about, so that if there be not plenty of chickens next Summer we shall be very unfortunate.

Miss Anne Stewart^[150] is going to school at London next Summer. We beg to be kindly remembered to the Miss Dowlings & with best love to your Sister & your Cousins I remain

Your affectionate Father
Alex Craig

¹⁴⁶ Seven nights, *i.e.* a week.

¹⁴⁷ William Young (Note 93) married Amelia Saumarez (*c.*1800-1838) in 1822. She was the daughter of Admiral Sir James Saumarez, Bart.

¹⁴⁸ This name might derive from the Scots for red (*reid*) and so describe the colour of the cockerel's feathers or a particularly notable comb. See also Letter 42, where Ann Craig spells the name "Reddy".

¹⁴⁹ Malay was a breed of game chicken noted for its large size. This cockerel was no doubt the 'Sir Mallay' of Letter 42.

¹⁵⁰ Anne Stewart (Note 85).

Cairnsmoor
March 1822

My dear Sophia

The painful task devolves upon me to communicate to you the sorrowful tidings of our very dear Keiths death, about three weeks ago our hopes were quite elated we fondly fancied that he gained strength very rapidly and that with the approaching season he was to be comparatively [*interlined: well*] but alas our expectations have been suddenly blasted; on Tuesday week he was seized with a pain in his right kidney which continued violent in the extreme till the evening of Wednesday when he became easier, still we never dreamt that the scene was so very near a close till the morning of Saturday it became evident all hope must unavoidably be banished and at half past eight he expired without one sigh or one struggle no one present had ever witnessed so calm so happy an exit, some hours before, he expressed himself more willing to die than hold life on the terms he had done; and said for the last twelve months it had been all hope and fear; care and anxiety; and disappointment.

I am aware Lillias and you will both feel most heartily; but from Miss Dowling I am sensible you will receive comfortable consolation superior to any thing I could offer; we who have witnessed the sad scene endeavour to submit to the will of Heaven with all due resignation, your Grand Mother is in a very distressed state; the many privations she has had pressed heavily upon her; but the dutiful consoling attention of her family now all assembled (with the exception of your Father who has not yet returned from business) greatly mitigates so heavy a dispensation.

Your Mother and Agnes are here both well and both send their dear love to you and Lillias your Mother begs you will request Miss Dowling will permit you to write to her here as she is not to leave us before the end of the week and your Grand Mother feels particularly anxious to know that your cough is quite gone.

Mrs McKean and her husband left us yesterday they are both well; Captain McKerlie and Harriet also went at the same time they shortened their visit owing to their little girl not being very well; your Aunt Margaret is to remain as long as your Mother does; her health seems rather better than it was, Mr Wilson is quite well.

Your Uncle James must long very keenly feel so sad a separation the poor fellow has lost his only brother his bosom friend and loved companion; he however bears up far beyond what [*page damaged: ?we cou*]ld have hoped for.

Say to Lillias with the very kindest regards of all here that her Grand Mother duly received her very welcome and very well written letter and it was

my intention to have replied to it before this time; but the present mournful circumstances made me deem it most prudent to write to you. Anne and Lillias Stewart often beg to be most affectionately remembered to your sister and you, they stay close at home.

I shall leave the remainder of this sheet lest [*i.e.* lest] your Mother may [?chuse] to add a little; I always am my dear Sophia your truly affectionate Aunt

Dunlop Stewart

29B. FROM ANN CRAIG TO SOPHIA AND LILLIAS CRAIG

My dearest children,^[151] as your kind Aunt has relieved me of the painful task of writing you of our present afflicted state I have only to add that it appears to me perfectly unnecessary to dress you in black until you arrive at home; you and your connections are unknown in Ambleside and as the colour of our dress is only a compliment paid to custom, I shall not trouble Miss Dowling to make any change in yours. I beg my best compliments to the Miss Dowlings and hoping soon to hear from you that your health is good I remain with dear love to you both your most affectionate Mother

Ann Craig

30. FROM ANN CRAIG TO SOPHIA AND LILLIAS CRAIG

Syllodioch
22 March 1822

My dear children

We had the pleasure of receiving your letter on the 12th, the day previous to our leaving Cairnsmoor. I had a letter from Aunt Dunlop yesterday, Grandmama was well and had been once at church, which you may believe was a sore trial to her. Aunt Wilson had returned to Stranraer, Uncle James drove her home in his Tilbury,^[152] and I am sanguine the little excursion will prove of great service to his spirits which were excessively depressed, never were two brothers more fondly attached than were James and Keith Stewart the blow to the survivor has been dreadful, indeed we were all proud of Keith, his naval career had been

¹⁵¹ This addendum was cross-written by Ann Craig over page one of Letter 29a.

¹⁵² A light, two-wheeled, open carriage, seating two people.

highly honourable his appearance and manners were so perfectly gentlemanly, and I may add that through life the poor followed him with blessings the rich with respect; let us my dears rejoice in the pleasing retrospect we have lost a beloved relative, but he has been withdrawn amid circumstances of peculiar mercy.

Our much esteemed friend Miss Smith is the bearer of this as far as Kendal; she leaves home tomorrow for Kenmore Castle which she does not quit till this day week when Mr Gordon takes her and Miss Dalzel a pleasure jaunt somewhere through Cumberland and Lancashire they are to take Ambleside on their way back so you shall be made happy by seeing your friends and Papa and I by hearing every particular of you both, the season of our meeting is fast approaching, we number the weeks daily and laugh at our folly; but Agnes is so constantly anticipating your return, that she never allows us to forget how the time goes. She has rather disordered her stomach by eating polyanthus's [*sic*] which she had gathered and chewed when out in the garden yesterday with John, otherways she is well and when her Papa came last from Edinburgh he brought her from her cousin Mrs Balfour^[153] a chain necklace, from Miss Louisa Orr^[154] a sash and fruit knife, and from cousin Susan^[155] a carnelian necklace so you may suppose how our natural vanity is puffed up by so much finery. I heard with [?real] concern that Barbara Ann was ill of typhus fever at her [*i.e.* your] Uncle Dr Duncans in Dumfries; I have since written three different times to your dear Aunt but without obtaining any reply, and as I know her to be devoid of caprice I am apprehensive the fever [*illegible*] to her own house and hinders her writing lest her letters may convey infection to us; God grant my fears may prove unfounded, but if I don't hear soon, I shall apply to a mutual friend in Dumfries for a [*illegible*] of the present cause of silence

We have had no frost all winter and scarcely a snow shower, but dreadful storms of wind and incessant rain, terrible have been the wrecks and loss of men upon this coast. Mr McLean of Mark^[156] has just failed for so large a sum as 80000, our friend Mr T Mure I am sorry to say loses a large sum as does Mrs Hannay of Ruscoe. Mrs Thomson Castramont is presently in Edinburgh. Miss Ann Thomson report says is to be married next month to a Mr Taylor^[157] with whom she made up acquaintance when she went to Stranraer on the occasion of Aunt Margarets marriage. You will see Miss Smith in a week or two after you

¹⁵³ Elizabeth Orr (1762-1829). See the Introduction: biographical notes.

¹⁵⁴ Louisa Orr (1769-1826). See the Introduction: biographical notes.

¹⁵⁵ Not identified.

¹⁵⁶ A farm in the parish of Kirkmabreck. At the time of this letter it was in the possession of Alexander McLean (1757-1833). See McKerlie, 1870-1879, IV, 292 and V, 375.

¹⁵⁷ Ann Thomson of Castramont married Lieutenant John Taylor of Stranraer on 22 April 1822.

receive this letter, and from her you will obtain any information you may wish respecting what is going on here about, for truly I remember nothing that I suppose would entertain or interest you. Papa and Agnes unite with me in dear love to you both, and in requesting you will make our best respects acceptable to the Miss's [*sic*] Dowling I remain my Dear Girls your most affectionate Mother

Ann Craig

31. FROM AGNES DUNCAN TO SOPHIA CRAIG

Monday Night 10 oClock^[158]

I have very little time My Dear Sophia but am unwilling to let Mary Ann go with [*interlined: out*] writing you – and begging Lillias & you to write to some of us now and then. I had a letter from your Mama a few days ago, and have hopes of seeing your Papa one of these days on his way from Edinburgh where he is at present – it is likely he may return with Uncle Henry who set off today for Edinburgh but was to go by Glasgow to see the boys who are both there this winter they are very busy striving for prizes in the different classes – which however they have little chance for this being their first year at Glasgow the very effort will meet its own reward, even tho' a prize should not be their due. I think you will be glad to see your friend Mary Ann once more – she is in very good spirits about returning to school. She speaks of you my dear Sophia with much affection. I trust you will continue to feel kindness towards each other I wish she may not get an increase of cold by the way – for she has been but poorly. Willie Stewart has a fever of cold just now – and I am writing by his bedside. Bab^[159] was at home for a few days on xmas week she begged her love to you and all her cousins at Ambleside. Kiss [*illegible*] for me tell her I think I see herself just now, when I look at her fathers picture on the wall in this room. May God bless you all My Dear Children and make you good and happy remember me with grateful kindness to Miss Dowling for all her kindness to my dear girls I am most affectionately yours

A Duncan

I have written Susan and Agnes and will be happy to hear from them at their leisure.

¹⁵⁸ The letter is undated and bears no postal markings. The reference to the Duncan brothers being in their first year at Glasgow University, however, indicates that it was sent between October 1821 and April 1822.

¹⁵⁹ Probably Barbara Ann Duncan (Note 99).

32. FROM SOPHIA CRAIG TO ANN CRAIG

Ambleside
20 April^[160]

My dearest Mama

We had the pleasure of seeing Miss Smith on Thursday evening and she was so good as to offer to take a parcel for you. We had a very pleasant walk to Low Wood^[161] on Monday last where we drank tea. I am afraid you will think my letters very stupid but I have nothing to tell you. I think I should not know Agnes if I was to see her we hear she reads delightfully pray tell me if she often talks of us. Our little gardens look very pretty now for the rain has brought every thing forward Miss Smith says she saw fruit trees in full blow at Manchester. I have not another word to say except that we are quite well. Give our love to Papa and Agnes and believe me my dear Mama your affectionate Daughter

Sophia Craig

33. FROM ANN CRAIG TO SOPHIA AND LILLIAS CRAIG

Syllodioch
10 May 1822

My dear children

I have waited for Miss Smiths return home lest she might have brought me any letters or reports from or of you that required answering; I yet hear nothing of her arrival at Gatehouse and shall defer writing no longer.

The pleasant prospect of the holidays now fast approaching, begins to occupy my thoughts as well as yours; your father is desirous to know the precise

¹⁶⁰ The part number accorded to this note reflects a belief that it was written in 1823, as evidenced by a pencilled note to that effect ('1823!') in a modern hand. Internal evidence, however, suggests that it is much better placed in 1822, since Sophia and Lillias are both still at Ambleside. It has therefore been placed in its present position in the correspondence. The note is accompanied by a sheet acting as a wrapper, addressed to Mrs Craig at Syllodioch, Gatehouse, and bearing the words 'Favoured by Miss Smith'. There are no postal markings.

¹⁶¹ William Wordsworth wrote, 'Low-Wood Inn, a mile from the head of Windermere, is a most pleasant halting-place; no inn in the whole district is so agreeably situated for water views and excursions' (Wordsworth, *W. A Guide through the District of the Lakes in the North of England*, London, 1835, 6).

day of June when the vacation commences so that if you still wish to come home by sea he may be at Whitehaven ready to receive you, and you know in order to save confusion and inconvenience such as we experienced last year a months notice is necessary that papas business may be all arranged so that he may have time to wait upon you. Uncle Henry intends going to Ambleside to bring home the Miss Murrays and Miss Fraser,^[162] he intends taking a passage for them all in the steam packet from Whitehaven to Dumfries^[163] and it was first proposed that he should bring you by the same conveyance, to that place, I however objected because it would occasion you to travel near 80 miles by land, which you are anxious to avoid, and I therefore proposed to which Papa readily agreed, that he should hire the boat in which you crossed last year, and fetch you to the fish house at once where you will be close at home. I certainly consider it perfectly needless to bring with you any shifts that are strong or stockings that are good because the fashion of them does not vary and more are provided for you here, therefore bringing good [*interlined:* under] cloaths that fit you I think had better be avoided if Miss Dowling pleases.

We are all well here so are your Cairnsmoor friends. Uncle James and Mr John Stewart from Kirkcowan^[164] were here two days last week; your uncle is to be back on Monday accompanied by the Honourable Mr M Stewart,^[165] they are to fish in the Cally Lake and eat and sleep with us.

I am sure you will both be grieved to learn that our most estimable neighbour Mr T Mure died last Wednesday and is to be buried next Wednesday, report says Mrs T Mure has a jointure of 800 £ a year but I do not expect she will reside [at] Knockbrex, tho' till after the funeral nothing certain will either be known or decided upon. Grandmama has put off her visit to us till your return, is not that a compliment to you. Aunts Margaret and Harriet are to be at Cairnsmoor about the 21, Aunt Harriet leaves Stranraer then, and is to live in the neighbourhood of Garli[e]stown. Agnes is much grown but the reverse of improved either in manners or appearance. I hardly know what to make of her. I see she is spoiled with regret she is a poor lonely little creature that I am often sorry for she longs exceedingly for your return and sends dear love to you both in which Papa and Mamma join. We beg our best compliments to the

¹⁶² Mary Anne Fraser, a fellow pupil at Miss Dowling's. She is mentioned several times in the correspondence, along with her sister Helena and their mother. The surname appears both as Fraser and Frazer.

¹⁶³ The steamer *Highland Chieftain* was purchased in March 1821 to operate on the route Dumfries-Whitehaven-Liverpool, and return. See *Cumberland Pacquet, and Ware's Whitehaven Advertiser*, 26 March 1821.

¹⁶⁴ John Stewart (1803-1848), son of the Reverend Anthony Stewart (Note 85).

¹⁶⁵ Possibly the Hon. Montgomery Granville John Stewart (1780-1860), a son of John Stewart, 7th earl of Galloway. *Pigot's Directory 1825-26* lists him under the entry for Newton Stewart/Minnigaff, with his residence as Corsbie. The latter is possibly Corsbie Hall.

Miss Dowlings and hope to have the pleasure of hearing that Miss Dowling now enjoys good health. I am my dear Girls your most affectionate Mother

Ann Craig

PS I had a letter a few days ago from our good friend Mrs Vicars from Alphington near Exeter, I am happy to tell you that family are now in health having agreed with the air of Devonshire they begged to be affectionately remembered to you both.

34. FROM ANN CRAIG TO SOPHIA CRAIG

Syllodioch
1 June 1822

My dear Sophia

I duly received Lillias's letter by which we understand the vacation commences upon Friday the 14th. Your father is in hopes of being able to procure the little vessel in which you crossed to Whitehaven last year, but it is necessary for that arrangement that that you should be able to leave Ambleside upon Thursday [*interlined:* the 13th] by the Whitehaven coach; [*interlined:* & be there on Thursday evening] will you therefore ask Miss Dowling if your doing so would be proper and convenient for her, and let us know by return of post. Should Papa be disappointed of getting the sloop in question you will probably have to come home by the way of Dumfries but so soon as your letter arrives, the manner of your travelling will be finally settled of which you shall [*illegible*] and needful directions.

We received your purse which is very pretty and Agnes has already got 1½ in hers, she is much grown and sunburnt like mahogany, she is constantly thinking and speaking of you both.

Your father heard from Aunt Dunlop yesterday, they are all well at Cairnsmoor, Aunt Wilson spent last week here, and is to remain with Grand Mama till the end of next; Aunt McKerie and her little girl have been there for a fortnight she leaves them today, and as the Captain has a fine pleasure boat and now lives opposite to us, we hope our communication will be frequent. Mr Smiths family are well, we drank tea with them two nights ago. The weather here is rather too dry by which the early shrubs are injured in beauty and the annual flowers are making slow progress, but the fruit blossom is most abundant, all we want is a little rain to secure the crop.

We have not, tell Lillias, one chicken, but as many hens are heard to call in the plantations, I hope some one will soon come to the door followed by a brood. Now do not neglect to write upon receipt of this, as there is little time to be lost, offer our best compliments to your Sister self and cousins from

Your very affectionate Mother
A Craig

35. FROM ALEXANDER CRAIG TO SOPHIA AND LILLIAS CRAIG

Cally
7 June 1822

My Dear Children

Lillias's letter has just now reached me; the plan that I had in view of bringing you home by Whitehaven has misgiven; the wherry which conveyed you over last year is just now undergoing repairs & will not be ready in time; the steam boat has met with some accident & cannot be depended upon performing her voyages with punctuality in the meantime, & during this calm weather the common coasting vessels would take at least two tides in coming over, to come therefore by Whitehaven under these circumstances would be leading you into a cul de sac. But you may return by that route.

I know nothing of Mr Duncans plans with regard to your cousins & Miss Fraser; you need not leave school till it breaks up on Friday, on which day you will make the best of your way to Carlisle stay there all night & & [*sic*] come on next day in the mail; it leaves Carlisle now early in the forenoon & arrives at Dumfries to dinner; you will stop there about four hours, & you will arrive at Enrick at 11 at night; when you take out your ticket in the Mail at Carlisle do not take it all the way to Gatehouse, but only to the 31st milestone beyond Dumfries where John will be waiting to bring you home; as it is needless to travel three miles out of the way at that time of night. I hope your Uncle may arrive at Ambleside and derange the above plan,^[166] but remember that your Mother is anxious you should arrive on Saturday evening to take charge of your sister the next day; Mr Jeffrey intends to dispense the Sacrament that day & all the servants are desirous to attend, which will not be the case if you do not arrive, as some person must be left at home all day to take care of Agnes. Take care that you pay all your bills at the different inns and eat & drink plenty. The

¹⁶⁶ *i.e.* their uncle would be able to bring them home, or part of the way, himself.

coachman will expect sixpence from each of you every stage & the guard who will leave you at Dumfries will be looking for a shilling, the waiter & chambermaids you will pay in proportion to their civility & attention. If you do not feel tired on your arrival at Dumfries, you may wait on Miss Bell in Buccleugh Street,^[167] & on Miss Smiths at the Windmill,^[168] rather than remain so long in the inn; but as to this you may do as you feel inclined. Miss Dowling will be so good as advance you what may be necessary for your journey.

Your Mother & Agnes are quite well and we are all looking forward with pleasure to the prospect of seeing you on Saturday evening.

Adieu My Dear Children

Your affectionate Father

Alexander Craig

36. FROM SOPHIA CRAIG TO ANN CRAIG

Ambleside
6 September 1822

My dearest Mamma,

We received papa's letter on the 16th of last month, and we were happy to hear you were all well.

We had a letter from Aunt Dunlop about a fortnight ago & we were sorry to learn that Uncle James cannot come here this season. My cousins and Lillias and I are going to Colonel Campbell's to dinner tomorrow. I hope Agnes is quite happy now with out us, give our best love to her & tell her we hope she takes great pains with her lessons. We all went to see a show of Wild Beasts, there was an Elephant and 2 Zebra's and a young Crocodile and a great variety of Beasts and Birds, the Elephant eat up everything that was offered it, somebody held out a large paper bill towards it and it took it and swallowed it in a moment, it lay down at the word of command & held of its great foot when the keeper told it, there was a pair of young panthers and some of us held them in our hand they scratched terribly.

The next time I write I should like very much to write one half to Agnes if you have no objection. There are such numbers of us now that Miss Dowling cannot take us excursions all together but she takes a few of us at a time, I have

¹⁶⁷ Not identified.

¹⁶⁸ The 'Windmill' is a reference to the tower on Corbelly Hill, now the Dumfries Museum. See the section on the Smith family in the Introduction: biographical notes.

been one and Lillias has been two. Susan and I asked leave to translate some time ago and we are still going on with it, I have got Clementi's sonatina's^[169] [*sic*] to learn just now & I have another piece of music besides I have begun to learn a prett[y] sort of pencil drawing would you have any objection to my doing you a pair of screens next half year in that style if I am able.

We are all well & join in best love to Papa, Agnes & yourself

I remain my dearest mamma
Your affectionate daughter
Sophia Craig

37. FROM ALEXANDER CRAIG TO SOPHIA CRAIG

Cally
2 October 1822

My Dear Sophia,

We reached home on Monday evening about 7 o'clock. Lillias stood the journey from Ruthwell quite well & seems to have gained hourly since her arrival; she says this morning that she feels as stout & well as ever & I trust she will have no relapses.^[170]

The want of horses at Keswick deranged our plans, & in order to reach Bowness^[171] in time to cross at low water we were obliged to start from Keswick at 6 o'clock, the road from there to Wigton 22 miles is wretched in the extreme & of course increased the fatigue so that on our arrival at Ruthwell Lillias was a good deal knocked up. Soon after she was put to bed she was awoken by the noise of rats which terrified her, & which produced a return of the spasm, but not to a great degree & on being put into the warm bath it soon subsided, she slept well & next morning was greatly better; I went into Dumfries to attend the assizes & as soon as my evidence was taken on the trial I left the court &

¹⁶⁹ Muzio Clementi (1752-1832), an Italian composer, pianist, and music publisher. His sonatinas were often used by those learning to play the piano.

¹⁷⁰ Both girls had evidently returned to school in Ambleside after their summer at home, but Lillias had been taken ill there and had to be removed by her father. They proceeded first to Ruthwell and then on to Syllodoch.

¹⁷¹ A ford across the Solway, which could be traversed on foot at low tide, ran between Bowness, on the English shore, and Seafield, south of Annan. It served as a route for cattle drovers until the mid-nineteenth century.

then learned that Lillias had been again taken ill & that Dr Melville^[172] had been sent for; on my return to Ruthwell I found Lillias better; Dr Melville came & remained there all night, on Tuesday morning he took three teacupfuls of blood from her arm, & administered some medicine since which she has evidently been much better, she has yet to take several doses of medicine & some antispasmodic mixture has been recommended, which I trust will have the effect of preventing any recurrence of the attack. I shall inform you from time to time how she comes on so I beg you may not keep yourself uneasy about her; she read a lesson to me yesterday & she is just now in the storeroom amusing herself in sorting & arranging the apples.

Tho' she is naturally much pleased at getting home, yet her mind is constantly turned towards Ambleside, she is every now & then figuring to herself how you & her schoolfellows are at the moment engaged, and I make no doubt that before Christmas she will be heartily tired of home & wish herself back again at school. She begs her tenderest love to you & Susan & Agnes & Mary Anne Fraser & in short to all her companions.

She has got your bonnet in place of her own, & a book belonging to Miss Allan^[173] has by mistake been put into her trunk, it is Letters to a Daughter^[174] presented to her by Miss Dowling, let me know how it is to be disposed of. We heard of Agnes this morning she is quite well & has conducted herself to the satisfaction of her grandmama & friends at Cairnsmoor.

Your friends at Ruthwell are all well, Barbara is quite stout again & goes back to school in about a fortnight & the two boys set out for Glasgow about the same time. Your mother sends her love to you, & begs to be kindly remembered to Miss Dowling. Write to some of us as often as you have leisure, a letter will always be welcome. I shall never attempt the road by Wigton in a carriage [?again], bad tho' the road over Kirkstone is yet it is decidedly better than the other, & tho' it be a few miles round yet it can be travelled in a shorter space of time & I would recommend that route on your return from school at Midsummer.

Remember me to your little schoolfellows & I remain

Your affectionate Father
Alex Craig

¹⁷² *Pigot's Directory 1825-26* lists Alexander Melville as a physician in Castle Street, Dumfries.

¹⁷³ Evidently a fellow pupil at Miss Dowling's. She is also referenced in Letter 77a as having been staying at Comely Bank, Edinburgh. For other references to what is probably the wider Allan family, see Letters 69 and 88a.

¹⁷⁴ This is possibly *Letters to a Daughter on Practical Subjects*, London, 1822, by William Buel Sprague (1795-1876). Sprague, a graduate of Yale and then Princeton Theological Seminary, was a Congregational and later a Presbyterian pastor. He was the author of numerous religious books, several of them offering moral guidance in epistolary form.

Cally
23 November 1822

My Dear Sophia

We were all glad to learn by your letter to Lillias that you continue to enjoy good health, and that you had obtained some additional top places. To maintain these, possibly to acquire more, it will be not only necessary to pay great attention to your studies, but also to reflect on what you read & thoroughly to understand every thing as you go on; without attending to these it will not be easy for you to apply, in your journey thro' life, the information that you may learn at school and every person is considered a dunce or otherwise, in a great measure, by the readiness which they apply at the moment, the information they may possess on any given subject brought under discussion. This does not come intuitively but is the result of severe study & reflection. I am far from wishing that you should ever make a display on any occasion, but I hope & trust you will be able to take a part in & express a sound rational opinion upon every subject that may occur [*interlined*: in conversation], but I need not pursue this topic any longer at present.

Lillias I am happy to say is quite well, indeed stouter greatly than usual & is perfectly equal to resume her studies at Ambleside she has turned quite plump & her stomach is so much distended that I have been threatening to apply to Mr Bain^[175] or some other of our dandies for the loan of a pair of their stays, to endeavour to make her figure a little more genteel.

I have been very busy for sometime past in that I have not had leisure to hear Lillias her lessons regularly, & until Mr Murray leave Cally I shall not have much time to attend to her; she is reading English, & learning a little French, & arithmetic, but she has written none excepting the letter she sent to you, I cannot compliment her upon her industry, but when we set seriously to work, I hope I shall have no reason to find fault.

Agnes was taken suddenly ill on her return from church last Sunday & laboured under a very smart attack of fever during Monday & Tuesday but it yielded to repeated doses of Calomel^[176] & Jalep^[177] & she is now running about as usual; Lillias has been a great acquisition to her, but I do not think Agnes makes much progress in her studies, she is not under much subjection to her sister on the contrary she now & then ventures to gainsay her commands.

¹⁷⁵ Possibly James Bain, listed in *Pigot's Directory 1825-26* as a smith in Front Street, Gatehouse.

¹⁷⁶ Mercury chloride, which was used as a purgative and fungicide.

¹⁷⁷ A purgative drug from the tubers of a Mexican plant.

Your mother is quite well – Nanny & Margaret have left us & gone to Mr Smiths at Gatehouse – John is off too so you [will] see a set of new faces on your return. I have got a nephew of Dans^[178] in Johns place & I trust he will turn out as valuable a servant as his Uncle did. Your friends are all well, James is in Edinburgh just now having gone in to attend the discussion of Mr Vans Agnews law suit,^[179] which has created an intense interest in Galloway, & in which your Uncle is unfortunately implicated, but I trust he will get free without too much loss. Lillias bids me say that she has finished one side of her frill, & wants to know if you have worked as much; she also desires that you will give her kindest love to all the young Ladies,^[180] & particularly to Mary Anne Fraser, Susan & Agnes, & Julia & Miss Woodville, & to be kindly remembered to the Miss Dowlings. Adieu

Your affectionate father
Alex Craig

39. FROM DOWLING TO ALEXANDER CRAIG

Kentish Town^[181]
3 January 1823

My dear Sir,

I have just received your letter, enclosing a bill for £67.14.0. which is the full amount of my last half year's account, including Mr Carr's,^[182] and I am very much obliged by your early attention to my request.

I am happy to hear that poor Lillias continues to improve in health, which is the first consideration. I daresay you find solitary lessons very heavy work,

¹⁷⁸ Dan is also mentioned in Letter 3. John must have been another outdoor or farm servant.

¹⁷⁹ A long and complicated case with its origin in the 1747 marriage of John Vans and Margaret Agnew, respectively of the estates of Barnbarroch and Sheuchan, both in Wigtownshire. It concerned questions of entail and the responsibility for various debts. The matter was eventually appealed from the Scottish Courts to the House of Lords. See Shaw, P. *Cases Decided by the House of Lords, on Appeal from the Courts of Scotland, 1821–1823*, Edinburgh, 1826, no. 50, Agnew v. Stewart &c.

¹⁸⁰ Presumably fellow pupils, none of whom have been identified.

¹⁸¹ Vincent Dowling lived in Kentish Town, north west of London, in his retirement. See the Introduction: biographical notes.

¹⁸² Thomas Carr, surgeon of Ambleside.

after her having been accustomed to so many competitors, but I am very sure she will get on quite well enough with you. I beg my best love to her, and I expect to hear that her little sister makes great progress in everything she is capable of teaching her.

With my kindest respects to yourself and Mrs Craig,

I remain, my dear Sir,
Sincerely Yours
Dowling

40. FROM MARY YOUNG TO ANN CRAIG

Edinburgh
29 January^[183]

My dear Mrs Craig,

I extract a passage in a letter I have received from my friend Mrs Campbell, as I know it will give you pleasure. She says “We have had Sophia Craig spending the holydays with us. I asked her to come for a week, but found her so sensible, amiable & innocent a girl that I was very happy to prolong my invitation for all the holydays. I thought her so good a companion for my Sister, who is exactly her age – and they are in the same classes”. Every account I hear of my dear little friends, both her & Liliias, is in the same stile of praise – I hope their little Sister is like them – I trust Liliases [*sic*] health is now re-established – and that your anxiety is now over – I do not believe her complaint is uncommon, and I often think our little Anne has something of the same kind – but it has never affected her health.

My Sister Sophia^[184] has had a severe attack of the liver complaint, from which she is now recovering. She has been seven weeks confined to the house, under a course of mercury, which fortunately has agreed with her, and to all appearances entirely removed her complaint. But she is thin & weak, and this severe weather is not the best for her rapid recovery. The rest of us are all very ill with colds at present though otherwise in good health, and even these colds we should have escaped had we remained at Harburn but unluckily, that was not in our power. I remained there longest; and came in only last Thursday, making my way with difficulty through the snow, which was above knee deep.

¹⁸³ Although not dated to year, the reference to this letter in Letter 40 makes it clear that this is January 1823.

¹⁸⁴ Sophia Young (1792-1871), sister to the author of this letter, Mary Young (1790-1842). See the Introduction: biographical notes.

The sheep had not suffered so much as might have been expected, for we had no drift in our part of the country.

We are very much pleased with Nanny Drummond who seems very skilful and [*page damaged*] careful, [?an]d has even at this unfavorable season, produced a good deal of butter from our dairy. She admires our cows very much in general, & praises both the quality & quantity of their milk – & the Guernseys are great favorites with her. I think we shall make a great figure next Summer.

My Father & Mother & all my Sisters join in affectionate regards to all your family and I remain dear Mrs Craig

Sincerely & affectionately
M. Young

41. FROM ANN CRAIG TO SOPHIA CRAIG

Syllodioch
21 February 1823

My dearest Sophia –

Your Grandmama was so good as transmit us your last letter to her, by which we had the comfort of knowing that you were in health, and believing your Aunt Dunlop would not fail to write you, I have been in no hurry as between snow and other storms, we have been close confined to the house almost since xmas and one day passing exactly like another, there is little to communicate except that we are all well. You would hear in course of the death of our venerable relative old Mr Murray,^[185] and we have this morning a letter from Dr Hogg^[186] informing us that his valuable mother died last tuesday after a short illness, and quite unexpectedly even to herself. I grieve for the whole family, particularly for our dear Susan with whom we have been most intimately connected.

Two of the Miss Smiths spent yesterday here, and by them I learned that poor Mrs Jeffrey is in the utmost distress having received intelligence of the death of a sister by scarlet fever, and that her mother and only sister was seized with the same dreadful malady; I intended to have gone to the manse today and spent an hour or two with my afflicted neighbour, but the excessive rain compels me to remain at home.

¹⁸⁵ John Murray of Murraythwaite (1726–1823), who died unmarried. Given his advanced age of ninety-seven, he deserved the epithet ‘venerable’. See the Introduction: biographical notes.

¹⁸⁶ If he is the same man as the Mr Hogg alluded to in Letters 4 and 69, it is the only time he is addressed as Dr Hogg.

Colonel Maxwell of Cardoness has been obliged to remove his two sons from Dr Thomsons at Penrith^[187] where they have been for years without making any progress, and has now settled them with a tutor at home. Lillias and I took a ride as far as Ruscoe a few days ago, and found Mrs Hannay in her ordinary delicate way the Laird expressing great anxiety about the destination of his two sons, being undetermined whether to send them to Edinburgh or to a finishing school near London, I am however of opinion you will find George & Robert at Borgue Academy^[188] when you come home at Midsummer tho' certainly Robert at least should be at the [*interlined*: university]. I had a letter from my dear friend Miss Young lately wherein she mentioned that Mrs Colonel Campbell had in the course of correspondence made very favourable mention of you, I trust my dear child you will strive to merit the good opinion of all your friends. I have heard nothing lately of your fathers London journey in the course of next month we shall probably know whether he will be obliged to go or not, he is gone to Kirkcudbright today notwithstanding the storm. I understand the whole of the plate and furniture belonging to the late Mr T Mure is to be sold off at Knockbrex in April when I expect Captain McKerlie and Aunt Harriet will be here, the sale will be worth attending as every article is [n]early new and handsome. Mr McCulloch^[189] comes to reside there at Whitsunday and I hear Mrs T Mure is expected from Liverpool shortly, but I know not where she will reside her sister Mrs Brown has a daughter lately.

Lillias is doing a very little at her lessons, and a great deal with her chickens, which I am sorry to say notwithstanding her care are very unproductive. Agnes is really a rough article, and very inattentive, she is hemming night caps for you, and has begged I would not tell Nell^[190] how idle and ill she is, and that I would give you her dear love in which Lill joins who also begs to be affectionately remembered to all her young friends she received Miss Woodvilles letter and was much gratified thereby, and she longs to hear some thing of Miss Frazer. I beg my compliments to the Miss Dowlings and with love to your two cousins and the other young ladies I saw. I remain my dearest Sophia your most

Affectionate Mother
Ann Craig

¹⁸⁷ *Parson & White's Directory 1829* lists a Presbyterian minister, the Reverend Henry Thompson D.D., as having an academy at Town head, Penrith, Cumbria.

¹⁸⁸ For further details of this school, see Gray, A. *Borgue Academy: the Story of a Village School*, Borgue, 1989.

¹⁸⁹ David McCulloch of Knockbrex, Borgue.

¹⁹⁰ Nell appears to be a pet or family name for Sophia, used only by Agnes. See also Letters 42, 49, 50, 52a and 84.

Syllodioch
21 March 1823

I daresay my dear Sophia you will be longing greatly to learn something of your Papas motions, but they remain with regard to his projected London journey just as uncertain as ever. You will very soon have the pleasure of seeing Miss Young she is a relation to whom we are strongly attached; she will I have no doubt see you and examine your attainments of which few women are so capable of judging, because few indeed possess equal accomplishments, and her kindness of heart and manner will render you perfectly at ease and happy in her society.

Your sisters and I have been ill with a feverish cold that rages in this neighbourhood at present. Lillias is perfectly recovered, I am nearly so, but Agnes still complains a little. I wish to know if you have escaped colds this winter the season having been so very severe, and the weather still continues as bad as possible, I have been just once cross the door step these three weeks. Lillias is so keen about the fowls that she hazards both wind and rain more a deal than I approve of; but she grows stout and stretches a little at least I have been taking tucks out of her frocks since she came home I am more anxious to see her health strong than to keep her to her lessons which I fear you will find sadly behind, but she must begin soon and labour hard, she has met with a distressing event in the death of poor old Sir Reddy who having been observed to droop his wings one morning, was in the evening discovered slain by Sir Mallay,^[191] who took the advantage of his ill health to destroy him; his remains were interred with many tears in the green plot within the garden wall.

Your father yesterday attended the funeral of his late friend Mr Harris of Spotts,^[192] his brother Charles who should have succeeded to the estate having died the week before, your cousin William Young inherits the property which is very considerable. I rather think none of the Miss Smiths will be at Ambleside this Spring, Miss Smith is on the point of setting off to visit her friend Mrs Chancellor near Biggar,^[193] they were all well last Monday when your Papa called upon them.

I mentioned in my last letter the death of Mrs Jeffreys sister Margaret, but when I called at the manse the next morning I found intelligence had just arrived of the death of Miss Thomson also in the same dreadful fever, she was

¹⁹¹ See Note 149.

¹⁹² Correctly Herries of Spotts (Note 106), but the handwriting is uncertain.

¹⁹³ Presumably a member of the Chancellor family of Quothquan and Shieldhill. Shieldhill Castle, near Biggar, was the family seat.

only three days ill and was buried the day after her sister,^[194] leaving Mrs Jeffrey the only daughter out of four blooming girls this time twelvemonth.

Our last accounts from Cairnsmoor Grandmama and the family were all well, Lillias has never paid her visit there, nor should I wonder were it postponed till you return from school.

Young Gategill saw Aunt Margaret last week at Stranraer in good health, I know not when I shall get up to see her, a journey of 50 miles causes me to think before undertaking it.

Lillias has finished her frill long ago, I cannot however praise the execution, and I exceedingly regret the dislike she shews to needle work because it is more useful than any accomplishment whatever, I should be happy to know you were fond of music, it is the only one of the fine arts in which I have pleasure.

The Miss Maxwells have now got a governess and the Master Maxwells a governor at home, I have not heard how they are likely to suit, having been confined to my bed the other day when Colonel and Mrs Maxwell called. Mr Brown Enrick spent [the] night before last here, Miss B had been ill with this cold but is getting better, William is limping about having sprained his ancle [*sic*] lately. Lillias sends dear love to all her young friends and begs Miss Woodvill will believe that it was only because Miss Dowling does not approve of the young ladies corresponding hindered her to answer her letter of which she was very proud. To the Miss Murrays and Miss Frazer join me in affectionate remembrance and do not neglect our best respects to the Miss Dowlings your Papa sends you his best blessing and Agnes many a kiss to dear Nell, and I remain

your truly affectionate Mother
Ann Craig

43. FROM MARY YOUNG TO SOPHIA CRAIG

Allan Bank
Saturday^[195]

My dear Sophia,

I am very sorry to leave this country without seeing you once more. It was impossible for me to accompany my Mother in her visit to you, but I trust I

¹⁹⁴ Margaret (b. 1798) and Mary (b. 1794), daughters of the Reverend James Thomson (Note 81), had died on 14 and 18 February 1823, respectively.

¹⁹⁵ The letter is undated. There is a postal marking, but it is too faint to read. It was addressed to 'Miss Craig/Care of Miss Dowling/Ambleside', so clearly predates her illness and return to Syllodioch, but the placing here is speculative.

shall see you again next Spring – and enjoy some happy hours with you. Give my kindest love to my friends Colina^[196] & little Susie. Amelia will tell them how sorry I am not to see them also. Believe me my dear Sophia

Your affectionate friend
Mary Young

44. FROM DOWLING TO ALEXANDER CRAIG

Ambleside
26 June 1823

My dear Sir,

I have this morning received your letter, containing a bill on Coutts & Co. for forty seven pounds, five shillings, and eight pence – the full amount of Mr Carr's, and my own accounts, for the last half year, and I am very much obliged by your attention.

I am glad Miss Craig reached you in safety, and that you thought she seemed well after her journey. It is, of course, too soon to judge of her improvement yet, but I trust, when you have had the opportunity, you will be satisfied with her progress in general, for she is now approaching the age at which the advantages of education should shew themselves.

I am happy to hear that Lillias continues better, but I think you are very wise to keep her at home until her health is perfectly established.

I beg my best love to her & her sister, and with kind respects to Mrs Craig & yourself, I remain,

My dear Sir,
Very Sincerely Yours,
Dowling

¹⁹⁶ Possibly a daughter of Lieutenant-colonel Campbell (Note 127). She is also mentioned in Letters 45a, 74 and 88a.

Comely Bank
27 July^[197]

My dearest Sophia^[198]

As an opportunity offers itself on Thursday by Miss Brown^[199] I have taken advantage of it, to pay my respects to you. I was very glad to come here as you may suppose, & like Edinburgh very much.

I perceived a change in Lill directly, she is grown a little taller since I saw her last, but really I was quite astonished to see the tremendous breadth. She resembles precisely a sack of flour with an egg on the top of it. We have all begun Italian, & Lillias says she intends to teach you and Agnes when she returns home. We brought a beautiful little dog with us from home called [?Mope], quite black except a white beard & breast – she is sitting upon a chair looking at me just now, Tom and she agree pretty well.

I have seen my brother Henry^[200] two or three times since we came to town, John^[201] was also here when we arrived. I am going to attend a drawing master in a few days so that I shall have a great deal to do.

I have not seen any of Mr Young's family yet except Anne,^[202] who was in town a few days ago – she is going with Colina to [?Bexly] in about 3 weeks. I left all your old companions in good health but could not possibly tell you all the loves & kisses sent you by them. Fat Tam is in his usual state of health, neither increasing nor decreasing. Julia begged me to send you a small packet whenever I had an opportunity which I now do. I have only been out of the house two or three times yet, so I have hardly seen any thing of the town. We are going out to Comely gardens^[203] presently which will be a very pleasant

¹⁹⁷ No year was given, and the letter bears no postal markings. It is addressed to 'Miss Craig, Syllodioch, Gatehouse', and is inscribed 'Honoured by Miss Brown'. Three different writers figure in this exuberant epistle, viz Lillias Craig and her two cousins, Susan and Agnes Murray. They were all, by now, pupils at Comely Bank. We must envisage them sitting at the same table, variously learning their lessons and contributing to the letter, sometimes with facetious comments on each other's portions.

¹⁹⁸ Pages 1 and 2 of this jointly written letter were written by Susan Murray (1810–1891).

¹⁹⁹ Possibly Miss Brown of Enrick, since she undertakes to deliver the letter to Syllodioch.

²⁰⁰ Henry Montague Scott Murray (1803–1844), son of John Murray of Tundergarth.

²⁰¹ John Dalrymple Murray (1800–1863), son of John Murray of Tundergarth.

²⁰² Anne Dashwood Young (1810–1876), the youngest daughter of Alexander Young of Harburn.

²⁰³ Comely Gardens lay to the immediate north east of the Palace of Holyroodhouse, Edinburgh. It had been the city's pleasure garden and the main venue for public

walk as it is a charming evening. I hope you are gaining strength daily. My dear Soph, excuse me for not enquiring after your health sooner as I ought to have done for I have had so much to say, that I did not know where to begin. We were all very glad to hear that Agnes was beginning to learning geography & I hope I shall have the honour of receiving an epistle from her soon. I am afraid I shall not be able to write any more just now.

So with love to all around you & hoping to see you soon, I remain, my dearest Sophia

Your sincerely affectionate Cousin
[?Bug]juice^[204]

You will not be able to read this. We have just returned from the gardens where we have bought a beautiful double flowering [*illegible*]. [*two illegible initials*]

45B. FROM AGNES MURRAY TO SOPHIA CRAIG

Dear Sophia^[205]

I am in a very great hurry – cant write a word – very busy learning my Italian – Believe me yours &c.

Agnes Murray

Postscript

Lillias has been saying all manner of things against me here don't believe any of of [*sic*] them it is a very great shame yours AM!! Among the parcels with [which] I believe you will be favoured there is a pincushion of Julias. D Senhouse asked me to convey a something of a similar nature which unfortunately was left at Ruthwell. All at Ambleside send you all possible love & kisses particularly [*seven illegible initials*]. [?MW] begged your pardon for not sending you anything as I fancy she could not fish any thing out. Don't you admire the [?stragling] of my [?line]. I am exceedingly affronted at your

entertainments. By this time, a plant nursery and market garden occupied part of the site. Despite the similar name, it was c.3 miles (4.8 km) from Comely Bank Row.

²⁰⁴ Susan Murray appears to sign with a nickname. Unlikely as it may seem, it is difficult to read this as anything other than 'Bugjuice'. The term is recorded, later in the nineteenth century, with the meaning 'hair oil'.

²⁰⁵ Agnes Murray's contribution to this jointly written letter was cross-written over 45a.

abominable messages about my [?greed], considering it is very impudent in you I will not reply to it. If you cannot read this keep till I see you. Good Bye (this only the pos[t]cript). My dearest Sophy I forgot to tell you that we shall be very much obliged to you for the newspapers as we want them for curling hair on high days & holidays. If you cant read this borrow a pair of specks.^[206] Good Bye

45C. FROM LILLIAS CRAIG TO SOPHIA CRAIG

My dearest creature^[207]

The important thing has begun my page Dear Sophy I was a little disappointed to learn that I shall not get home next month but I was not very much as I had not great expectation of it. This is bad writing and worse sense [*interlined in Agnes Murray's hand: very true AM*] but I have an excuse for Susan and Agnes are both learning their lessons aloud the latter asking whether it is Calais Straits or Straits of Calais and shaking the table at every word. I beg you will pay no heed to the shameful account given of my Sylph like form full of [*interlined in Agnes Murray's hand: resembling a sack with a pair of legs tied to it AM*] beauty and grace by my 'Kinswoman' in her silly epistle. Agnes desires me to tell you that she is busy learning her geography but she is only making a noise, Susan is singing most melodiously just now I fancy it is a sonata for I cant make out a tune. I am learning an overture by Haydns [*sic*] jus at present I find it rather difficult. My drawing makes no speed I don't know what to do with it. Miss Orrs and Miss Hogg desire to be kindly remembered to Mamma, I cant write more for my two troublesome cousins who talk shuch [*sic*] nonsense [*interlined: and*] make shuch a noise one at each elbow. So give my love to all my dear friends including chance and believe me to be your very affectionate Sister Lillyetss

[*in Agnes Murray's hand:*] A most [*page torn*] [int]eresting effort of Miss Lillias's Genius I must say. AM

[*in Lillias Craig's hand:*] Impudent creature.

²⁰⁶ *i.e.* spectacles for the eyes.

²⁰⁷ This part of the letter was cross-written by Lillias Craig, with intercalations by Agnes Murray.

46. FROM ANN CRAIG TO ALEXANDER CRAIG

Syllodioch
5 oclock Sunday 31 August 1823

My dearest^[208]

Sophia rode as far as the milestone beyond Enrick yesterday and complained much of fatigue on her return, although it took two hours to make out that 3 mile ride she slept well at night, her skin was almost cold to my touch tho' she said she felt warm and this morning she felt very tired when she got up, she took scarcely any thing to breakfast, but at eleven had a little bread and butter, and at one a tea cup full of broth before she set out to ride, she went as far as the bathing house and a turn upon the sands and is not so weary as she was yesterday, tho' she scarcely tasted any thing but a few beans to dinner; I have sent to beg Mr Charters^[209] to come here tonight to tea, so I shall tell you what he says tomorrow morning before I close this letter. It rains heavily, there is now small hopes of getting your bag carried tomorrow.

9 oclock P. M.

Mr Charters came at 6 and remained till 8, he saw no change in Sophia either one way or other except witnessing a slight fit of tremor which I mentioned having observed her to be occasionally distressed with, he felt her pulse which during the attack became hard but not otherways changed she is now asleep while I write beside her, and on the whole has passed rather a comfortable day. Good night my dear.

Monday morning.

Sandy is come but has not brought any letters, he says your horse is no better he understands, and I am rather inclined from hints to doubt whether [*illegible*] be attentive either in dressing or ordering its exercise. Sophia slept very soundly and I consider her this day exactly in her usual, unable to eat breakfast and very weary. It has rained for 15 hours in torrents, but is rather fairer at present though without the appearance of becoming a dry day. I fear poor wee Lill will find difficulty in reaching Edinburgh, but in that cause she will not be easily

²⁰⁸ The letter is addressed to 'Alex. Craig Esq. at 48 Queen Street, Edinburgh'. This was the Edinburgh residence of Alexander Young of Harburn, where he lived from c.1790 until his death in 1842.

²⁰⁹ The same individual appears in Letters 49 (as Charteriss) and 64 (as Charteris). He was apparently a surgeon residing in Gatehouse (Note 216).

frightened, give her the dear love of Sophia and myself. Chance^[210] is in great good care and has had his butter and jelly as usual. I beg my best regards to Mr Youngs family and the Hoggs and Orrs. I shall write to your sister on Wednesday morning, so that you shall hear of Sophia that day if you go to Ruthwell, and I remain always yours most affectionately

Ann Craig

47. FROM THOMAS SHORTT TO ALEXANDER CRAIG

Friday Morning^[211]

My dear Sir

I have been waiting for an opportunity to send you the medicine. Owing to a mistake of Mr Youngs servant it was not sent in the last but it will yet be useful as I should think [*illegible*] progress to recovery will now be going on much slower than hitherto and more need of foreign aid to establish complete convalescence. The Sulphate of Bark is a very powerful medicine, 8 grains containing as much power as an ounce of of [*sic*] the powder and equally efficacious. I generally give 3 grains twice or thrice a day in pills adding as much of the extract of [*?Sodium*] as to form a mass. When pills cannot be easily taken I give it in syrup but this has often a soapy taste but you can please your patients palate. The Sulphate I think maybe given with advantage in restoring strength, [*?lessing*] headache and delivering the blood to the proper channels. I do not send you much of it, but should it agree and you wish to continue it let me know I will send you occasional supplies. With best regards

I remain
Yours faithfully
Thomas Shortt

²¹⁰ One of Lillias' poultry, a cockerel. See also Letter 66.

²¹¹ This is given as the first of Dr Shortt's letters. The letter is undated, however, and there are no postal markings. It is uncertain whether or not it has been placed in sequence correctly.

5 George Street, Edinburgh
31 August 1823

My Dear Sir

I have read your letter which was given me this evening by Dr Short[t] with every attention in my power, and am inclined to think that the present derangements in your patient Miss Craigs constitution proceed from her particular period of life and that we cannot hope they will be entirely removed till the change of state looked for shall have taken place.

Having no means in our power by which we can directly bring about the wished for changes in her constitution our attention must be chiefly given to the means by which Miss Craigs strength may be best supported and her general health improved; and accordingly I hope you will agree with me in thinking that the Ingesta and Egesta^[212] are the primary objects of consideration.

Miss Craigs diet should be nutritious but light and of easy digestion. It may consist of milk, the different sorts of farinaceous matter and a little bit of roasted brandered or boiled beef, mutton or fowl for dinner. All baked or stewed meats and pastry of every kind should be avoided; and likewise all vegetable matters which have a tendency to become ascenscent^[213] or flatulant should be carefully abstained from.

Whether while Miss Craig's tendency to headache continues the use of wine or any other stimulating liquor be advisable is a point which admits of doubt and which can be determined only by an accurate attention to the effects which they produce. If the headaches shall appear to be kept up or aggravated in any degree by the wine which she takes its use had better be discontinued.

With the view to improve the state of her appetite as well as to determine a flow of blood to the uterine system I would recommend the continued use for some time of the Compound Rhubarb Pill given in the quantity that opens the bowels gently but certainly once in the 24 hours.

Unless it shall appear to you that the bark is producing obviously beneficial effects I would advise that in place of it you should try small doses of Columba with the SubCarbonate of Iron.^[214]

With the view of relieving the headaches as well as of determining the blood to the lower part of the body the pediluvium^[215] may be had recourse to

²¹² Food and drink, and excreta.

²¹³ Slightly sour; turning sour.

²¹⁴ Presumably ferrous carbonate, FeCO₃, which was used as an iron dietary supplement to treat anaemia.

²¹⁵ Footbath.

I conceive with some prospect of advantage and care should at all times be taken that her feet and legs are kept sufficiently warm.

Miss C. should have daily as much exercise [*interlined*: in the open air] as she can take without fatigue and this exercise may be either on horseback or in an open carriage as shall best suit her present situation.

If notwithstanding the employment of the plan of treatment which has been suggested the headaches should still continue it may adviseable to apply a few leeches to the temples.

These are the only hints which it occurs to me to suggest at present upon your statement; I shall be happy to hear from you that any of them have been of use.

Yours very truly
John Thomson M.D.^[216]

48B. FROM THOMAS SHORTT TO ALEXANDER CRAIG

10 South Castle Street, Edinburgh

The only suggestion that can be made in addition to the annexed letter is the use of the tepid sea bath daily, at about 90 degrees of Fahrenheit scale, which would probably have better effects in Miss Craigs present state than the pediluvium, which might increase the debility, whereas the other would more decidedly equalise the circulation and give strength & tone to the constitution generally. The body should be well dried with warm flannels and a thin flannel vest put on next the skin if not already in use, with worsted stockings, and socks of the same material continued during the night if the feet & legs are cold.

Thomas Shortt M.D.

²¹⁶ *The Post Office Annual Directory from Whitsunday 1823 to Whitsunday 1824 ... Edinburgh*, Edinburgh, 1823 [hereafter *Post Office Directory Edinburgh 1823-24*], lists John Thomson, surgeon, living at 5 George Street, Edinburgh. His written opinion on Sophia's case is followed by an addendum by Dr Shortt. It may be noted that the whole is posted to Jos. Charteris Esq., Surgeon, Gatehouse. The latter does not appear as a surgeon in Gatehouse in *Pigot's Directory 1825-26*.

Syllodioch
3 September 1823^[217]

My dearest

Your letter arrived this morning and proved a great treat to us both. Yesterday for the first time I thought I observed a change for the better upon Sophia which is fully born out by her general state of health to day (tho' she was a little sick after dinner it soon went off) this I attribute to the use of the bark which she finds most comfortable to her stomach, and certainly for these several days her headach[e]s are much abated, a consequence we were led to expect, if the bark agreed with her constitution. Charteriss has been here with Drs T. & S. prescription they appear to contain little beyond what is already in practice and I would gladly hope you will not see any necessity of sending us to Edinburgh believing their advice can be followed with better effect to her beside Papa than any where else and here whenever it is fair we command Donald a powerful aid, and we have quietness a blessing she highly prizes, I therefore shall not carry her to Dumfries. Dr Thomson candidly says in her case little beyond attention to regimen and exercise can be done, then why risk even a short journey and perhaps an experiment.

We have dreadful weather nothing has nor can be done with the hay. Sophia did not get out at all on Monday, yesterday she rode as far as the Loch, and just escaped a drenching, to day it has showered incessantly, but if it looks fair any time before 6 I shall send her out for a short ride. Willy Burns^[218] brought me a letter from Dunlop to day. James^[219] and Lord Blandford^[220] passed to Kirkcudbright of course did not call. My mother wants Sophia up for change of air, I have written to decline the invitation. Mr Grey^[221] drank tea here last night and pressed the use of his carriage and horse which was very kind. Your own stabled one at Cally Sandy brings me word is better, but I shall not close

²¹⁷ The letter is addressed to 'Alexander Craig c/o Mr McDiarmid, at the Courier office, Dumfries'. *Pigot's Directory 1825-26* lists McDiarmid as a printer in High Street, Dumfries, and the publisher of the *Dumfries and Galloway Courier*.

²¹⁸ Possibly a servant of Dunlop Stewart's and the same person as the Wil in the following paragraph.

²¹⁹ James Stewart (1791-1877). See the Introduction: biographical notes.

²²⁰ Presumably George Spencer Churchill (1793-1857). He was married to Jane Stewart (1798-1844), daughter of the 8th earl of Galloway; and became the 6th duke of Marlborough in 1840.

²²¹ Not identified.

this letter till I send you the latest accounts tomorrow morning how every thing is going on.

Thursday morning Sophia slept soundly and complains less of weariness to day than usual, she has not however been able to eat any breakfast but will take something by and bye, there are no letters for you at all, your horse continues to mend, and the rain continues to fall tho' not in such torrents as heretofore. Wil wants you to bring him the following articles. I copy the characters.

Oil of Oreganum 1 oz	1/4 ^[222]
Powdered Cantharides 3 oz	3/-
Venice Turpentine 4 oz	8
<u>to be separate</u>	
Soap Linament 5 oz	3/-
Liquid Ammonia 2 oz	
to be mixt	

Kiss my darling Agnes for both Nell and me, give our united love to our dear friends at Ruthwell, and do not neglect to pay Mrs Frazer for Sophias journey from Penrith, and our sister for my mother and Dunlops shoes, and believe me your most affectionate

Ann Craig

50. FROM ANN CRAIG TO ALEXANDER CRAIG

Ruthwell
28 September 1823

My dearest

Soon after your departure on thursday Sophia retired to her room and bed, where she was joined immediately by Miss Frazer; they were overjoyed to meet and remained an hour together, she slept well till 6 [*interlined*: next morning] when she awoke with a high pulse and headach, and declared she would be careful of again talking so much, she kept her bed till 12 and room till 5 [*interlined*: on Friday] and well it was for her as at 1 came Bab and Agnes, in

²²² The prices in the right-hand column, which are in a much darker ink and possibly in a different hand, were presumably entered after the commission had been completed. The substances listed all had veterinary uses in the treatment of horses.

half an hour after the two Miss Smiths made their appearance, but only staid [*i.e.* stayed] an hour; then arrived Mr William Taylor, Mr Will, and Mr McKye,^[223] then Mr and Mrs John Henderson^[224] their daughter [?&c], all to dinner. Miss Campbell and Mrs Frazer and two Miss Frazers in the evening, so I am sure you will agree with me in thinking her own apartment the only proper place, we occupy the low room next the front door, Sophia sleeps in the large and Agnes and I in the small bed. Yesterday at 6 in the morning I gave her a glass of bitters, which had the desired effect of saving pills, and she was uncommonly [*interlined:* well] all day, Frazer and Wallace drove her slowly in the gig as far as Clarence field,^[225] and in short she was finely; today I reckon her just in her normal, but she takes a little porridge and milk, the milk set into a basin of hot water to prevent that feeling of cold in the stomach of which she complains and so prepared it appears to agree with her, and in all respects she is very comfortable and contented, the boys all strive to shew her attention, but your letter brought a greater expression of cheer into her countenance than anything she has met with; when the Kirk skales^[226] she will go out to ride and I shall write you again upon Wednesday how we go on which letter you will get on Friday.

Bab is perfectly stout, so is our wee darling her kindness to Sophia is most pleasing she made no lament for missing you, but says Nell is well off that gets leave to stay at home, which is far the best place, Mrs Henderson and her daughter stay here, Henry leaves Liverpool tomorrow. We had dreadful hail and thunder here yesterday forenoon, today it is fine and James Veitch^[227] says it is going to be good weather. I hope you will take care to direct the servants to do what will contribute to your own comfort for I shall not be quite at ease about you lest you neglect to give proper orders. It is now one o'clock, I shall not close this letter till the latest and let you know how Nell has been through the day.

9 o'clock.

Sophia is snug in bed having drank a little ginger tea in the parlour along with the family, which tea she liked and so long as she will take it I shall take care and give her a little to dispel the lump in her throat and swelling of her stomach

²²³ The foregoing three persons have not been identified.

²²⁴ This may be the John Henderson who was Henry Duncan's lawyer. See Munn, 2017, 75, 77, 83. *Pigot's Directory 1825-26* lists a John Henderson as a member of Kirkcudbright's Common Council though it is uncertain whether or not this is the same person. The Henderson family is presumably that which lived at Whitecroft (Note 232).

²²⁵ The villages of Clarencefield and Ruthwell lie *c.*1 mile (1.6 km) apart.

²²⁶ More usually skail, Scots for to disperse or to scatter.

²²⁷ James Veitch was the Reverend Henry Duncan's faithful and long-term gardener at the Ruthwell Manse and, after Duncan's retirement, at Clarencefield. See Munn, 2017, 102, 194.

after eating; she has both walked and been driven out in the gig today but only short distances, I wish I may be able to say her appetite is improving against Wednesday, your sister and family are well and your two girls^[228] join with me in much love to you, while I ever am yours most affectionately

A Craig

51. FROM ANN CRAIG TO ALEXANDER CRAIG

Ruthwell
1 October 1823

My dearest

I have the pleasure of telling you that Sophia has risen this morning better than I have seen her for long; the bitters agree with her in every respect and of them she takes a glass about 8 [*interlined:* or] when she wakens, and two days ago her Aunt and I agreed to try the effect of a little ginger tea in removing the distension of which she complained after eating; it has succeeded to a wonder, proving not only pleasant to her palate, but instantly curing headach, and making her feel quite lively, so she takes a few teaspoonfuls as often as ever she likes of the ginger infusion, and I hope by the time she tires, or it loses its effect something else may be found out. One of the boys drive her out every day for about an hour, as some part of each day has admitted of exercise and we walk about when the gravel is dry, one of her cousins always having an arm to offer even to lead her to her bed room at night, in short she is kindly attended and does not fret at all for you tho' many loves are sent to dear papa. We are to go to Seafeld^[229] one of these days and remain or return as she feels inclined. I shall write again on sunday so you will hear on tuesday morning, and not close this letter till bedtime to night, ~~it is 11 A. M.~~ now. On Monday night Agnes was attacked with one of her fits of fever, her Aunt and Miss Whitly^[230] made her swallow a doze^[231] of salts yesterday morning, and she is now better tho' pale and feeble. I have got a very severe cold attending her through the night my throat head and teeth give me considerable uneasiness. Your sister is very well and to day Bab and Miss Whitly with little G. Mclean are off to the sea side,

²²⁸ *i.e.* Sophia and Agnes Craig.

²²⁹ A property south of Annan, Dumfriesshire, on the Solway Firth.

²³⁰ Not identified.

²³¹ Ann Craig's normal spelling. All other writers in the present correspondence used 'dose'.

there to stay a little longer. Bab is perfectly strong eating like a ploughboy and [?]ping equal to her capacity of stomach. Henry will be home tomorrow. Mrs Henderson and her daughters left for Whitecroft^[232] last night there are no company here but me at present and I hope none will arrive, but whether or not makes no difference to Sophia who mixes little with the family, keeping her own room always during the uproar of meals.

9 oclock PM

I have just got my bairns put to bed, Sophia having passed a pretty good day, Agnes almost quite recovered, but upon asking her why she was continually wishing for tomorrow she said because I want the four months done that I may get home.

I hope next letter which shall be written on Sunday, to say something more decided about our health and probable time of return, I am sure when the time is come, Sophia will have to go to Dumfries in her uncles gig, and myself in one of the coaches, and it appears to me the best way for you to bring a gig to Dumfries, leaving me to travel in the Mail, as the very idea of a chaise makes her like to throw up. I have nothing new to communicate, I am very unwell and after giving your sisters kindest love must wish you good night, being very truly your affectionate Wife

A Craig

52A. FROM ANN CRAIG TO ALEXANDER CRAIG

Ruthwell
5 October 1823^[233]

My dearest,

Sophias headachs are certainly greatly diminished both in frequency and violence, but I dare not say I observe any change for the better either in her appetite or strength perhaps I have yielded too much to her disinclination for food, but aided by Henrys remonstrance, I shall henceforth insist upon a

²³² Whitecroft (or Nether Denbie) farm, Dalbeattie. A reference to the farm in *Decisions of the First and Second Divisions of the Court of Session, from November 1815 to November 1816*, 325, indicates that Francis' father Robert had moved from Comlongon to Whitecroft in 1801.

²³³ The letter is addorsed in Alexander Craig's hand: 'Ruthwell 5 Oct 23 My wife', a date of writing confirmed in the appended note by Sophia. The letter bears a three-line Dumfries postmark for 7 October 1823.

something in the shape of food being taken every hour, and since her complaints have not visibly increased let us hope they are in the way of being mitigated. She stood her yesterdays ride well, and came here in company with the preaching Mr Irving^[234] (who is today a bridegroom and she was much interested by his singularity he is evidently the vainest of mortals.^[235]

I know not what to say about your professed journey to Edinburgh considering that as Sophia cannot travel inside a carriage we run some risk in getting her conveyed home without catching cold, far less to carry her further away, but I leave the decision of our motions entirely to yourself especially as Sophia would rather not go tho' if you desire she should, she will not hesitate to comply at all events I think we should be preparing for our removal somewhere next week against which time this air and all around will have had a fair trial; and if you fix upon our going to Edinburgh, pray send me my best cap which is in a small bandbox I think in the middle drawer in the back room and the piece of black silk which is in the nursery wardrobe that I may make it while here into a gown, also two or three pair of silk stockings in the upper drawer of the back room and some gloves which are in same wardrobe and write me particularly what you really wish us to do that we may be ready to suit your own convenience of travelling with us, as you will be required to take care of her on the road, as I can neither drive a gig nor ride upon the top of a coach, and some one will be needed to support and keep her warm. Nothing in the world can exceed the tender kindness of Henry and your sister, and throughout this afternoon Sophia has been uncommonly well, tho' it is a most dismal one the company consists of Mr [and] Mrs Crosman and Miss Campbell from the West Indies with Mr and Mrs Phillips,^[236] but she, Agnes and I are sitting in the drawing room free from the crowd. Bab is to be home tomorrow at which Agnes does greatly rejoice because she complains that Nell is very cankered and often she wonders what you are doing and longing to get home which is far the best place she says.

I shall write you again upon Wednesday fondly hoping that this days wellbeing may be the beginning of better health to our dear child, one thing I shall say there is nothing wanting on the part of her friends here that the most judicious kindness can bestow.

²³⁴ Given the epithets employed, this was almost certainly the Reverend Edward Irving (1792-1834), a local man and friend of the Reverend Henry Duncan. He had been ordained to the ministry of the Church of Scotland by the presbytery of Annan in 1822. He was a most eccentric and unorthodox minister, to the extent that his licence to preach was revoked in 1833. See Munn, 2017, 98-99.

²³⁵ The parenthesis was not closed.

²³⁶ Christian Duncan (Note 15) was married to Walter Phillips (c.1788-1857). He resided at Comlongon Castle, Ruthwell, and was factor to the earl of Mansfield.

Mrs McKean is quite unreasonable, I wrote her both before and since my return from Edinburgh, to neither of these letters did she reply nor make any enquiry regarding the family, yet she frets because I do not force intelligence upon her, yet I shall write her tomorrow, we shall hope to hear that you have made out your excursion to Whithorn comfortably and that your grand feasts go off well,^[237] I am pleased that Mr Murray has given the poor souls a good dinner and I hope they will behave themselves and not swallow too much whisky. I trust you are taking care of your own comforts and giving Jessy orders to provide what is necessary. [*Illegible*] and pray write in the course of this week what you really wish us to do respecting our motions east or west. Your sister is quite well and they all join your own family in begging much love to you. I must not forget to tell you that after trying the ginger a few days with sensible good effects it lost the power of exhilarating Sophias spirits or dispelling that fullness of which she complains after eating the least morsel. I have taken most of the Doctors pills Sophia not having required more than the glass of bitters can effect which is so far good.

Believe me my dearest most affectionately

Yours
A Craig

52B. FROM SOPHIA CRAIG TO ALEXANDER CRAIG

Sunday Evening 5 October 1823

I received your letter last night, my dear Papa,^[238] and was quite amazed with the accounts you give of the magnificent fête in expectation. I hope Sandy's prophecy respecting the Irishmen, may prove false. I think I am a great deal

²³⁷ Several published accounts refer to the canalisation of the Water of Fleet as having taken place a year later than the date of this and the following letter, e.g. Coombey, 2007, 21: 'The Water of Fleet was canalised in 1824 using the manpower from the Killibegs estate and the ingenuity of the factor, Alexander Craig.' This letter, however, seems to suggest that the work was, at least substantially, completed in autumn 1823. David Steel (*in litt.*) writes: 'The Cally accounts for expenditure on the entailed estate in 1823 show an expenditure of £2,567 18 shillings and 7 pence on "a new cut for the River Fleet." That would suggest that the canal was built in that year, although the new harbour at Port Macadam and the swing bridge were not built till the 1830s ... I don't recall any accounts for festivities connected with the opening but these might not have showed up if they were not in Gatehouse'. It may be noted that the festivities appear to have taken place in Whithorn and that October would have been an appropriate season for Murray's estate workers to be returning to Ireland before the onset of winter weather.

²³⁸ This was written as an addendum to Letter 52a.

better since I came here, I seldom have a headaches, and then they are so slight as not to be worth mentioning. Indeed I think my greatest ailment is ill nature, of which poor Agnes bitterly complains. I went to Seafield yesterday in the gig accompanied by Uncle Henry, and returned in the evening, Bab really looks well, she is to be sent for tomorrow if the weather permits. Goodbye dear Papa,

Your affectionate Daughter
Sophia Craig

53. FROM ANN CRAIG TO ALEXANDER CRAIG

Ruthwell
8 October 1823

My dearest

My letters I am sorry to say are merely written for the purpose of keeping you free from uncertainty, for truly I have not a single sym[p]tom either better or worse to communicate. Sophia continues as nearly in the same state as formerly as you can well conceive; her headachs are almost gone but she remains listless and spiritless with scarcely any appetite, but her Uncle in person really compels her to swallow a certain portion of animal food twice a day, she also drinks Coaco [*i.e.* cocoa] in the morning and warm milk as often as she is thirsty which now appears to [agree], or at least not to disagree with her stomach, unless it occasion the excessive parched state of her tongue when she wakens in a morning, but she had that complaint to a certain degree before she left home; she continues perfectly contented here; but notwithstanding I think we should prepare to shift our quarters the beginning of next week, and I hope to hear from you on Saturday that you have arranged to meet us at Dumfries and on what day; Sophia will be transported in the gig and I can go up in the Robert Burns^[239] which pass's here in the morning, and if we go home I can follow her and you in the evening mail if to Edinburgh we must do as we can, but you will be so good as bring Sophias stuff frock with you, if we are to go farther away I leave every thing to yourself being ready to accompany you where you please your dear child to be transported, but I own her being unable to travel except in an open carriage rather deters me from wishing her to risk a journey, and it appears to me the safest way would be in a gig to Moffat one day, Crook another,^[240] and Edinburgh the third, and you her driver, think of this and let

²³⁹ The *Robert Burns* coach ran on the main route between Carlisle and Dumfries.

²⁴⁰ Crook of Devon, Kinross-shire. From here they would presumably have travelled south to cross the Firth of Forth by the Queensferry crossing.

me hear from you what you resolve upon doing. Agnes is quite well, but this is sad dreary weather however we have continued to have Sophia out every day except this and last Sunday they are too stormy and wet for an invalid to move from the fireside. I see a grand account of the opening of the Canal, I hope the Mondays feast went off well, and that you are now snug at your own house after your Whithorn excursion. Your sister and family are quite stout, and we are presently free of visitors but truly a few strangers make little difference in this racketing family they have not got a single peat home, and not much grain led, and still some to cut, but I think they do not shear so green as we do in Galloway. Should Mary want flax you will find it in the passage press, the key is on the bunch tied with a white string.

I am never beyond the gate, so have no news. Sophia leaves me to ride or drive, I never leave her.

8 o'clock,

Sophia has been just in her usual but in the afternoon her spirits were rather depressed, and she expressed joy at the prospect of soon meeting with you, we must keep our motions a secret from Agnes, who longs exceedingly to get home, and the parting will of course be a sad job, but Sophia could not bear her company, and I am thankful I have her with her good Aunt till her sister become stronger at least.

We all unite in much love to you, while I remain your truly affectionate Wife

Ann Craig

54. FROM THOMAS SHORTT TO ALEXANDER CRAIG

Edinburgh
30 October 1823

My dear Sir

I received last night your letter of the 27th inst,^[241] and with all due deference to Mrs Craig coincide with you in thinking your daughters health improved. I regret however that you did not bring her here as I think it would have been of use to her, as she appears to travel without much inconvenience. From the symptoms detailed in your letters it would appear that her complaints are of a nervous nature, but whether induced by her period of life, which is probable, or from derangement of the digestive organs, it is difficult to say.

²⁴¹ *i.e.* 27 October.

The headache, affection of the throat, and state of pulse are all produced by nervous irritation, and unattended with any immediate danger, although their continuance may materially interfere with her constitution and future health. That no time may be lost I recommend you strongly to try the effect of Valerian and to make it sit easier on the stomach it may be combined with Bark in equal proportions and if you put it in a solution of liquorice (Black Sugar) it may agree still better.

In regard to diet I disapprove of the quantity and quality of the milk used, which I think is much too great, and instead of cows milk would strongly urge you to try ass' milk ~~instead~~, giving it fresh milked, or warmed as you do the cows milk 3 times a day, in quantity of about 2 gills at each time. It is much lighter than the cows milk, containing much more [*illegible*] matter & much less butter & curd – consequently greatly better adapted to your daughters condition. The cocoa is good, and the [*interlined*: arrow root] also, but rather rich if boiled with milk. I would try porridge made of barley meal or barley & oatmeal in equal parts, and occasionally a small portion of good beef or mutton or game – pheasant excepted. I think you should not force her to eat at any time if much averse to it, and should her taste be variable I would be inclined to let her have what she likes best in the way of food as being more likely to agree with her, as nature generally points out what is most salutary. Encourage exercise and being as much as possible in the open air, and riding – but avoid fatigue.

The sensation of the ball I think may always be relieved by a teaspoonful of Ammoniated Tincture of Valerian in milk.

When you next write answer the following questions.

1. Is the face less emaciated than the rest of the body?
2. Is the urine increased and of a clean light colour?
3. What is the appearance of the tongue?

With best regards to Mrs Craig believe me in haste

Yours very faithfully

Thomas Shortt

Lillias & Miss Hardy are at Harburn [?fat & hale], there to remain until the house here is ready.

Mr & Mrs Young return about the 4th of November.

If Valerian in powder does not answer try Infusion or Ammoniated Tincture of Valerian – dose of the powder about a scruple^[242] 3 times a day.

²⁴² A unit of weight = 20 grains, $\frac{1}{3}$ drachm, $\frac{1}{24}$ oz. Apothecaries' weight. It was often represented by the character \mathfrak{S} .

55. FROM JOHN IRVING TO ALEXANDER CRAIG

Annan
1 November 1823

Dear Sir

At Mrs Duncan's desire I send you another bottle of the stomachic bitters for your daughter. She may continue to take them as she did while at Ruthwell manse. I would advise you to take her out every day, as the air, though cold, is bracing & healthy. You will, of course, use all proper precautions to prevent her, as far as possible, from catching cold by adapting her dress to the state of the weather. Do not press her to eat more than she feels quite agreeable to, because you will only overcharge the stomach, & produce indigestion.

The quantity of milk, & other things which your sister tells me she can take in the course of the day, is quite sufficient to support her, and to give additional strength. The bitters are calculated to give tone to the stomach, keep the bowels easy, and greatly to stimulate the uterine organs.

Let her spine be well rubbed twice in the day, with some of the Camphorated Spirits of Wine, a receipt for which I now send you.

A little of it may be put into a cup, & folding a piece of flannel round the fingers, & dipping them in the liquid, she must be rubbed along the spine from the nape of the neck to the extremity of the back

The application of it should be more particularly attended to across the loins, because the nerves, which supply the womb, come out there, and it is good practice to stimulate those parts as much as she can bear, without producing any excoriation.

There is no question of keeping her spirits moderately exhilarated, being attended with the very best effects. Society of her own age, and of the other sex at times, to produce a change & variety of their amusements will be the best way of doing this. In the course of a month or so, I would advise a change to Ruthwell, and I am greatly mistaken if she does not receive most decided good from doing so. If her feet, in this cold weather, should ~~be~~ become uneasy & numb, let them be well rubbed, but not hot applications put to them.

With best respect to Mrs C I am yours truly
John Irving^[243]

²⁴³ *Pigot's Directory 1825-26* lists him as a surgeon in High Street, Annan.

[undated]^[244]

My dear Madam

I am induced to offer the following remarks, in consequence of Mrs Duncan having been so good as to shew me your letter the other day – there is evidently a change taken place for the better in your daughter's case, which, in my humble opinion, might be medically improved. The nasty stuff which she passes is [*illegible*]ed secretions, consisting principally of bile, in almost a putrid state, & the mucus of the bowels become diseased from interrupted digestion.

The small portion of Epsom salts mixed with the ingestions will answer, to a certain extent, in removing from the bowels this diseased mass; but the point is to prevent its formation, by changing – what we medical people call, the diseased [*?action*] which, for months, has been going on.

This can only be done by giving a preparation of Calomel in very [*?divi*]ded doses – I have taken the liberty of sending you some prepared in the manner I have mentioned; that is with 24 pills there are only 4 grains of Calomel, so that by taking three in the day, she will only have half a grain of the medicine in whole, or one sixth of a grain in each pill.

If you find that these operate rather more than you require, you can give one in the morning, & another at night. I have also sent you some Compound Tincture of Gentian, of which you may give her one teaspoonful in a little water, or weak wine & water to the extent of a wine glassful in the morning, immediately after her pill, and the same in the middle of the day. After you have gone on with the [*illegible*] for three days, you will then begin to give her four drops of the Tincture of Cantharides which was sent some time ago, and it may be taken along with the Tincture of Gentian, and [*?renewed*] also twice in the day. I would advise you, in the gentlest manner to begin rubbing all her stomach & bowels with a piece of flannel warmed or a soft flesh brush, so as to induce a degree of redness & determination of blood to the surface. By acting on the skin in this manner you influence the state of the stomach, between which & the ~~stomach~~ [*interlined: skin*] there is the strongest nervous sympathy. The ingestions of soup ought to be continued & as her stomach begins to retain food, in whatever way, better than lately, let her have some given by the mouth of such a nature as pleases her best.

I am happy to say that Barbara is doing as well as under all the circumstances we could have expected. The swelling is diminishing, her general health is

²⁴⁴ No date was given, and the letter bears no postal markings. It presumably sent to Ann Craig under a different cover, perhaps enclosed with the letter Irving sent to Alexander Craig (Letter 55) on 1 November 1823. In any case, it was clearly sent when she was at Syllodioch between her visits to Ruthwell and Edinburgh.

improved, and as she eats, drinks, & sleeps well, with improving looks & strength, the ultimate result, I have every reason to hope, will be favourable.

Dr Irving

Be so good as to write soon to Mrs Duncan after you have tried my plan. Do not be afraid of a little sickness at first – that will go off.

Yours truly
John Irving

57A. FROM ANN CRAIG TO ALEXANDER CRAIG

21 Comely Bank
19 November 1823

My dearest

Yesterday Dr Shortt again called Dr Hamilton tho' at the time he assured me he had no additional cause of apprehension and he afterwards told me they mutually agreed in entertaining good hopes of Sophias ultimate recovery; on what they found their hopes I know not, for I will never deceive you, to me she appears losing ground daily; when we came here she found great difficulty in going up stairs now she can scarcely go down, her last attempt was upon Sunday when we had her out a few hundred yards, and feeble was her step I assure you; to day we would gladly have her out, but it blows a perfect tempest, her strength is quite unequal to face it; still Dr Shortt says "Oh, I assure you she is better I know by her pulse," you know how variable a thing her pulse is. I judge by her being unable to sit up, she lyes now constantly I may say, except when obliged to walk between the little room we occupy here, and the bed chamber which is on the same floor, she eats no better, but is compelled to swallow a wine glass full of soup, which I obtain from a cooks shop three times a day and as much wine as we can get her to take, say three glass's sometimes less or more, but bread or meat in form she can rarely be prevailed upon to taste, and then in very small quantities, say of either about the size of a pill; she takes a purgative every night, and to day she has begun with a tea spoonful of some nasty stuff, an hour before getting up, which was intended to give her an appetite but has in the first place produced intolerable loathing; she still takes her cocoa with a little cows milk which here is excellent, with soup and wine, and that forms her food; her spirits are almost constantly depressed, with the

most ardent longing to get home of which I at present see no prospect of her being gratified. In justice to Dr Shortt I must say he is extremely attentive and anxious about her would to God I could see a single symptom of the truth of his good report to lay hold of, but my ignorance makes me timid.

I paid Miss Hardy £2 2s last Monday for our previous weeks accommodation and 5/6 pr bottle for wine every luxury of course I provide as also washing. I have seen [?Mrs] Young twice but she is now gone to Harburn the rest of the family are come to town for the Winter, them I have not seen – nor have they made any enquiry after us, but Mr and Mrs Harris^[245] have called since I came here and are very civil. Miss Orr^[246] is ill her sister is to be here to see us to day [?Mrs] Balfour is better. I am never cross the door except when Sophia is with me, we have been out three times since coming here for a few moments each time. Lillias has had a cold but is better, the Miss Hardys are well – we get the Scotsman but it is needless to send any more papers, as here the Miss H get the Courier from their brother^[247] of early date – I have nothing to say regarding management at home – but always am most affectionately yours

A Craig

57B. FROM SOPHIA CRAIG TO ALEXANDER CRAIG

My dear darling Papa,^[248] I am a great deal better, & I think I should be quite well if I was only at home. My plan is that we should proceed to Noble House^[249] on Monday next in an open chaise; take the mail on Tuesday & go as

²⁴⁵ Not identified.

²⁴⁶ Miss Orr and her sister are probably Agnes (1769-1846) and Louisa (Note 154). Mrs Balfour, in the next sentence, was a third sister, Elizabeth Orr (Note 153). See the Introduction: biographical notes.

²⁴⁷ The only living brothers of the Miss Hardys at this date were William Hardy, captain in the Honourable East India Company's Service, who died the following year (Note 328); and Thomas Hardy (1794-1836), a surgeon, of Edinburgh and Charlesfield, Dumfriesshire.

²⁴⁸ This addendum to Letter 57a was written in Sophia Craig's hand.

²⁴⁹ Noble House was 16.5 miles (26.5 km) south of Edinburgh, situated on one of the two Royal Mail routes from Edinburgh to Dumfries. The service in question essentially followed the route of the modern A701, via Noble House, Crook Inn and Moffat. It ran on Sundays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, leaving Edinburgh at 6 a.m. It was timed to meet the Portpatrick mail for Ireland at Dumfries. The reason for taking a chaise to Noble House on the Monday, to pick up the Mail there the following day, was in all likelihood to spare Sophia the fatigue of a very early start from Comely Bank and more time on the Mail coach than was absolutely necessary.

far as Dumfries; take another chaise on Wednesday & reach home in the evening. Mama thinks the top of the coach too high a seat, but I could sit beside the coachman, [*illegible*] I am not the least afraid of sitting high

A. Kiss^[250]

58. FROM THOMAS SHORTT TO ALEXANDER CRAIG

Edinburgh
19 November 1823

My dear Sir

I am happy to inform that Sophia is decidedly improving in health having rallied during the last four days from the effects of the castor oil which has been of real service to her. I am still of the same opinion regarding her as I stated to you and consider her complaint to be simply a derangement of the digestive organs and in this Dr Hamilton agrees with me having taken him on Sunday to see her lest I should have formed too favourable an opinion of her state.

Mrs Craig thinks she is better today than she has seen her and the young lady desired me to say that she was quite well. They will both write you tomorrow by Mr Duncan who is here and who will also give you his opinion. We have had little time however as yet to work upon and therefore will be better able to tell you something decided in another week. If she was more manageable I should expect her recovery to be more rapid but as she is very difficult to deal with from dislike to anything that has any chance to relieve her we must have patience in this respect and be satisfied with slow improvement until she is able to swallow with greater facility than at present. We all however agree that she is firmer on her legs today than she has been and as she has every comfort & seems happy at Comely Bank I am much satisfied with her removal there.

I remain
In great haste
yours Sincerely
Thomas Shortt

²⁵⁰ These two words are enclosed in a small circle.

59A. FROM ANN CRAIG TO ALEXANDER CRAIG

21 Comely Bank Row
20 November 1823

My dearest

Dr Shortt has just left us he tells me he wrote to you last night and I shall finish this letter tomorrow. Sophia had a better day yesterday than usual to day she is not worse, but tomorrow is a purging day, and I anticipate increased weakness. Dr S continually asks me to say that she is on the whole improving, but alas I dare not in truth say that I think so the first doze she had of oil I did think did her much good; but how purging a poor creature every second day may in the end answer I know not, but I never presume even a remonstrance tho' I yesterday said I begged he would put the next doze of oil over her throat himself, he complained bitterly of her being ill to manage, merely because [?her] poor stomach which rejects good food cannot receive a load of [?dinner].

Friday morning

Sophia took two pills last night instead of oil, they operated in 7 hours and I hope not too severely; she is you may believe very languid, but proposes when up to add a P. S. to this letter on the whole she is not visibly worse today, which considering every thing, is more than I dared to hope; the relinquishing that absurd quackery of ass's milk, and substituting some of the best cows milk I ever tasted, in its stead, given at the rate of 4 or 5 gills per day proves a great relief to her. We find ourselves very comfortably settled here, Dr S. visits us daily; of the Youngs except Mary for a moment I have seen nothing since your departure part of them have been I understand in town except last Sunday constantly.

Poor Sophias lips are getting sore, she drinks a good deal of wine, Dr S procured me sherry, and here I have obtained old East india [*sic*] madeira. We long much for the time of our dismissal to dear home, I am not sure that we are now equal to the journey but we may endeavour to hope we shall be.

I received the newspaper from Carnsalloch^[251] when you send others address them to Miss H 13 Duke Street^[252] that saves postage which this situation

²⁵¹ Carnsalloch House, in the parish of Kirkmahoe, Dumfriesshire, is a Palladian mansion built in the mid eighteenth century for the Johnston family. *Pigot's Directory 1825-26* lists Peter Johnston (1749-1837) of Carnsalloch among 'Resident Gentry'. Johnson had been a family friend and protégé of James Murray of Broughton, on whose recommendation he was returned as Member of Parliament for Kirkcudbright in 1780. After various disagreements with Murray, he resigned at the close of the 1786 parliamentary session. Craig presumably had business or personal reasons for being at Carnsalloch when he dispatched the newspaper.

²⁵² The Edinburgh address of Thomas Hardy (Note 247).

incurs. Henry left town yesterday having placed the boys to his satisfaction at St Andrews; it would be a great relief to me were you to communicate with our friends at Cairnsmoor & Castle^[253] as tho' unaccountable I feel some difficulty to get writing here, the interruptions are incessant.

10 oclock

Sophia is now up and wonderfully well, she has taken cocoa to breakfast but no bread her appetite certainly has not improved, yet the Dr says she is better, she has only been out once since Monday; it blows a perfect gale for the last three days. Lillias is quite well. Sophia does not care for her company, she is too playful, the music master comes for the first time this evening. I have never been out except with Sophia my own health however is in its usual, indeed I have no inducement to stir the air is very cold and wind still high.

I long to know that you got well home but I endeavour to cast all care regarding household affairs behind me not knowing when I shall be back to regulate matters. Your letter of tuesday is just brought in I am glad you are safe at home and when you are not busy shall hope to hear from you occasionally. If no material change takes place I shall write you only once a week so when you do not hear oftener conclude I have nothing material to communicate. I ever am most affectionately

Yours
A Craig

59B. FROM SOPHIA CRAIG TO ALEXANDER CRAIG

My dear dear Papa,^[254] I have been better for two or three days, and I hope to get Mama persuaded to go [*interlined*: home] in a few days, for I do no [*sic*] not like this place.

²⁵³ *i.e.* Machermore.

²⁵⁴ This addendum to Letter 58a was written in Sophia Craig's hand.

Saturday Night^[255]

My dear Sir

Since I wrote Sophia has not been just so well her stomach having been deranged a little by the use of some old port that produced acidity, but she is again tolerably well and certainly has not lost ground. In some respects I consider her better than she was and although still much of an invalid she has many favourable symptoms and why I think the debility to [*illegible*], which evidently depends on the torpor & want of action existing in the digestive organs. Dr Hamilton has seen her twice and like myself has been unable to trace anything like diseased structure in any part of the body. She is without fever or thirst, sleeps well, is entirely free from pain of any kind, has no appearance of swelling about the stomach, hands or feet, the tongue is moist and the feeling of the skin natural, so that I must say there is every fair prospect of recovery although slow in progress and I sincerely trust my ideas regarding her and my strong wishes for her well-doing may be realized.

She has been fretting much about home and is most desirous of returning, and I see now no reason to oppose it as the treatment of her complaint is very simple. She has been much benefited by purgatives particularly castor oil and all she requires is an occasional dose of this and to have her strength kept up by [*?wine*] and nourishing diet, both of which she now submits to being persuaded of the good effects of both, and there is another advantage she will derive by being at home, which is exercise on horseback, or of any kind, which she will not take here on any account.

Mrs Craig will give you her sentiments regarding her state by this post and will require your advice regarding their of of [*sic*] mode of travelling & when they are to set out and I shall be glad to hear from you if I can in any way assist them should you not come for them yourself which I think is scarcely necessary unless you are not much engaged. In haste I remain

My dear sir
Yours faithfully
Thomas Shortt

²⁵⁵ The letter is undated but the reference to Letter 61 shows that it was written and posted around the same date, *i.e.* 29 November 1823.

61. FROM ANN CRAIG TO ALEXANDER CRAIG

21 Comely Bank
30 November 1823

My dearest

Dr Shortt informed me yesterday that he considered our remaining here longer unnecessary, and that he would by last nights post write to you a medical letter, and leave me to arrange regarding our mode of returning. Are you to be in town very shortly and shall we wait for you, or make the best of our way home alone in a post chaise, the Mail is out of the question. John Nish^[256] mentioned that there was a new chaise of Douglas here which he was anxious to get posted home, if we knew where it was to be found we might take it but it does not matter; we shall only wait your reply to set off, provided Sophia is at all able; indeed her anxiety to be at home is at times almost distressing and a great exertion she will make for that purpose but in spite of Dr Shortts assertion to the contrary I do think her much weaker than when she came here she has not been down stairs since this day week, she attempted it yesterday but turned at the third step. We get about two wineglassfuls of soup down her throat daily but always with excessive reluctance and her wine and brandy costs her many tears; she is more fretful than formerly and very cross with poor lill who behaves towards her with great kindness and forbearance; altogether I am anxious that you should not be led by Dr S to expect an improvement lest you should be woefully disappointed.

Dr Shortt has been most kind and attentive, I am not only anxiously set upon your rewarding him before we leave town, but also doing it handsomely. I asked [the] Miss Hardys as a matter of course speaking of their brother and brother in law^[257] how medical men were paid for long attendance, they replied from 5/ to 7/ each visit was held fair pay, a consulting physician only, required a guinea. I paid Dr H that sum each time; the least therefore you can offer Dr S is from £15 to £20, let it be done when you next write, and let him know my sense of his kindness; and as I have a fear he intends to refuse payment couch your letter to him in such terms as to render his refusal impossible.

The painter delivered your letter but said nothing about the £10. I have not seen him since. I have still £28 of what you gave me, but it will cost 5 guineas to pay Miss H, the servants and washerwoman, even tho' we be ready

²⁵⁶ A John Nish is mentioned in the list of those who did not attend Sophia Craig's funeral (see Appendix A). He is also mentioned in Letter 62.

²⁵⁷ The references are to Thomas Hardy (Note 247) and to Robert Allan (1777-1826), the second husband of Sophia Hardy. Allan was a surgeon, with premises at 24 George Street, Edinburgh.

to start the end of this or beginning of next week, besides the account at the druggist which I shall settle I therefore could not pay Dr S. and have plenty to travel with; beside it will look better to come from you.

Mrs Young and Sophy^[258] called here last Friday and and [*sic*] made a point of my taking a drive, I had not been out for long therefore went my own health is good and Lills cold better – the Orrs^[259] were here yesterday. Miss Orr did not leave the coach being very poorly. Mr [*or* Mrs] Balfour is better. I intend some day this week to walk into town and call upon my friends if my poor child is in a tolerable way but the depression of her spirits renders me very averse to leave her an instant.

I am happy to know you have got quit of your cold and in hopes of soon hearing from you I remain my dear your affect wife

A. Craig

62. FROM ANN CRAIG TO ALEXANDER CRAIG

5 December 1823

My dearest

Your letter of Wednesday is just brought in, and my feeble companion would have been off immediately had she not been under a purgative, but I sent for Edward and have engaged the chaise of Douglas, and am to go to Noble house tomorrow, so have nothing now to do but to pack and provide food for Sophia upon the journey, wine, soup and biscuit seems the only requisites tho' she detests all the three. I have begged Dr Shortt to desire the druggist to send in his bill to night so all will be clear except the Dr himself, but I think you will have written to him before I leave this tomorrow, as I should have a most painful feeling to go and leave him unpaid he has often here been obliged to take a coach and toll bar dues cost him outlay, as well as the trouble of regular attendance, and I owe him for a bottle of sherry and another of vinegar which can any [*illegible*] paid in the general settlement at the last.

This is a fine day and as Douglas chaise is an old one which belongs to a gentleman and comfortable in all respects I hope we shall get well home. I have plenty of money tho' the painter has not paid the £10.

²⁵⁸ Sophia Young (Note 184).

²⁵⁹ Probably the unmarried sisters Agnes and Louisa again. The reference to Miss Orr in the next sentence might suggest that it was the elder sister, Agnes, who stayed in the coach.

We too have had our storm but not such a terrible one as you. I hope to reach Dumfries upon Monday forenoon, but when at Beatock^[260] shall have less anxiety. Lillias is very sad at the prospect of our parting but she is quite well, perhaps it might be a saving if you can command the chaise and John Nish to meet us at Castle Douglas but it matters not. I should hope to be there upon Tuesday if not on Monday night but if I don't get a note from you bidding me expect John when I arrive at Castle Douglas I shall post home. I have written in a great hurry and continually interrupted. We all send love and I am affectionately yours

A Craig

63. FROM THOMAS SHORTT TO ALEXANDER CRAIG

10 South Castle Street, Edinburgh
5 December 1823^[261]

It appears from careful examination that Miss Craigs present state of debility proceeds solely from the great torpor & want of action that exists in the organs of digestion. There is however no derangement of structure to be discerned in any of the thoracic or abdominal viscera and although she is about the period of menstruation the non-appearance of that secretion is to be considered the effect not the cause of her present state of health.

From the many good symptoms that exist, which have already been enumerated, I conceive there is every prospect of ultimate recovery, if the necessary means are pursued, and although she is reluctant to the employment of these, which may be considered the effect of disease, yet they should be steadily persevered in and only discontinued by their reception being actually refused by the stomach.

In the first place to assist nature in liberating the stomach in its weak state from any offending matter a purgative should be given every second or third day of castor oil or the pills marked N^o. 1. and in the intermediate days the pills or powders of aloes [*illegible*] to strengthen the organs of digestion should be given night & morning. These are marked N^o. 2.

This simple plan might comprehend the whole of medical treatment, but as vomiting has invariably produced good effects, an occasional emetic might

²⁶⁰ The Beattock Inn and Posting House was at Kirkpatrick Juxta, Dumfriesshire, two miles from Moffat. The Royal Mail from Edinburgh to Dumfries was scheduled to reach there at one in the afternoon.

²⁶¹ The similarity between these notes and the contents of Letter 60 may be noted.

be tried as prescribed in N^o. 3, and repeated in in [*sic*] 3 or 4 days or discontinued as the result of the first may direct.

The next point to be considered is diet and it is strongly recommended to try the effects of ass's milk in the quantity of half a mutchkin^[262] 3 times a day [?drawn] from the animal and zealously continued until the stomach positively rejects it. In addition to this, food of easy digestion should be administered and that which contains more nourishment in the smallest compass should be preferred. Exercise should also be encouraged in fine weather during the hottest part of the day. Of clothing nothing may be said as that is sufficiently attended to already.

Thomas Shortt M. D.

P.S. Wine should be continued as directed in the quantity of 5 or 6 wineglassfuls daily, a proportion of brandy or spirit equal to the above may be substituted or mild ale when the stomach [*illegible word – heavily erased*] loaths the wine.

64. FROM THOMAS SHORTT TO ALEXANDER CRAIG

Edinburgh
Sunday^[263]

My dear Sir

Mrs Craig and your daughter left this yesterday and I sincerely trust will reach you in safety. Mrs C from being the constant attendant and nurse had become extremely nervous from confinement and the latter had certainly lost strength the few last days she was here, but it was evidently from a want of food, as she would almost eat & drink nothing. There were however no other bad symptoms, and I think all will yet do well, if she can be made to take nourishment. Mrs Craig will give you my opinion of the care & treatment necessary – I disagree entirely with Mr Charteris and the opinion transmitted from Dr [?Veitch] & Mr [*illegible*] as I think they consider the effect as the cause of her disorder and as to bleeding in the present state of things or at any time it is quite out of the question.

²⁶² A Scots measure of liquid capacity, approximately equal to $\frac{3}{4}$ pint Imperial.

²⁶³ The letter is undated but the reference to the departure of Ann and Sophia Craig from Edinburgh indicates that it was written on 7 December 1823 (which was a Sunday, as Dr Shortt noted).

As nourishment is the great object to be attended to [*illegible*] inducement [*three illegible words*] is to urge you to see it completed ~~to~~ & if possible to give it with your own hand for a time. I am most urgent that the ass milk should be given immediately as directed in my instructions and as soon as you receive this send [?]over] the [?]country] & procure an ass at any trouble or expense and if possible have it ready for her on arrival. I also am very desirous regarding wine & wish her to take half a bottle a day until it produces unpleasant effects which Mr Rae must judge of. At present the stomach will [?]receive] any thing and her reluctance is merely a nervous feeling which must be over come and I entreat you to insist if necessary on a compliance with the above direction. With best & kindest regards to Mrs Craig & your daughter

yours faithfully
Thomas Shortt
over^[264]

let me hear from you by return of post should they have arrived. I have just seen Lillias who is quite well.

65. FROM JAMES STEWART TO LILLIAS CRAIG

Syllodioch
9 December 1823

My dear Lillias^[265]

I have great pleasure in being able to acquaint you that your Mother & Sophia arrived here this forenoon, and that the latter stood the journey fully as well as was expected and seems much pleased to be again at home your Father and Mother are both perfectly well, but I am desired to say that Mr Craig will not be in Edinburgh so soon as was expected tho' it is probable he may make out his visit to you in the course of this winter.

I am glad to hear that you continue to enjoy your health, and that your size is considerably increased since you went to Edinburgh, it will always afford me great satisfaction to hear of your happiness, and I feel quite confident that you will by your good conduct and attention to your studies, gain the approbation & regard of the ladies under whose care you are placed.

²⁶⁴ An instruction to see overleaf, where the last lines of the letter are written.

²⁶⁵ The letter was addressed to 'Miss B. L. Craig, 21 Comely bank, Edinburgh'.

Your grandmother and Aunt Dunlop are both quite well and frequently enquire for you, they look forward with pleasure to the time when your holidays take place which will soon arrive & then we hope to have a happy meeting at Cairnsmore. I hope your mother will fill up this sheet of paper & give you all the news of your chickens &c &c. In the mean time believe me to be My dear Lillias your very affectionate Uncle

James Stewart

66. FROM ANN CRAIG TO LILLIAS CRAIG

Syllodioch

Wednesday morning [10 December 1823]

My dear Lillias,

Sophia having taken pills at bed time passed rather a poor night, but her Uncle being here she got up at 9, and is now sitting at the parlour fire in an easy chair, very languid but satisfied at being home, where we found all things in good order. Chance has as usual claimed bread butter and jelly at breakfast, he does however I am sorry to say sit upon the trees, as the old cock uses him ill at the stables, but you may depend upon my ordering him to be killed. Your father does not appear to have any time fixed for going to Edinburgh he is very busy at present so Miss H will want her pillow longer than I hoped, give our love to both the ladies. We did not stop at Dumfries longer than to change horses, and found on reaching Castle Douglas that Mrs D^[266] [*illegible*] was expecting us and had every thing in order fires blazing in parlour and bedroom and comfortable we were. I only had a glimpse of Miss Bell as I passed her door, I gave Miss H's parcels and Mrs Shortts to her care. Old Betty^[267] is [*illegible*] here, uncle leaves this today, but is soon to be back with grandmamma. I have seen nothing even in the house beyond what the parlour contains, therefore have no news for you and having you may believe much to do, and your friend Sandy^[268] waiting for the letter, I must have done being your most affectionate Mother

A Craig

[*written on the flap of the letter in Sophia's hand:*] Dear Lillias I am better

²⁶⁶ The context suggests that accommodation in Castle Douglas had already been arranged by or for them. *Pigot's Directory 1825-26* lists four innkeepers, one of whom, Robert Douglas, ran the Douglas Arms. 'Mrs D' perhaps refers to his wife.

²⁶⁷ Not identified. Perhaps the servant mentioned in Letters 4 and 25.

²⁶⁸ Not identified. Perhaps the person waiting to take charge of the letter.

Sunday^[269]

My dear Mrs Craig –

I need not tell you that we feel sincerely the satisfaction that dear Sophias amendment must give her friends God grant this slight improvement may increase & continue. I would fain hope her life may yet be spared to make you & her father happy. But I need not say all this, nor how anxious her friend Mrs Campbell & all of us are about her. I should have written often to you, could it have done you any good.

My object just now is to state to you, what Miss Hardy^[270] is reluctant to do from delicacy – vizt – that when Lillias returns here, if you think it would be for the benefit or happiness of her & Agnes that they should be together – to beg you to consider that Miss Hardy, (well aware that at Agnes's age much instruction cannot be given) would not think herself entitled to receive for her the same salary as for pupils. The increased happiness & cheerfulness of the whole family – Lillias especially, & the benefit in the eyes of the world of your reposing this trust & confidence in her would be such advantages as would amply make up for profit and she would think you did her a great favour in trusting your child to her, paying merely the additional expense she might occasion in their little family – say 30 pounds a year. This might be too little to pay the expense of one, or even a second pupil – but a third makes less difference and she could afford it well enough, as she would not add either to house rent napery washing or servants. Of course they would do her all the justice in their power in education, and I have only to add that this proposal is entirely between you & me, and unless it meets your wishes & full approbation need never go farther.

Their new pupil Miss Syme^[271] is a fine little girl & considerably improved. Miss Hardy has written to her friends at my suggestion to beg she may learn music still, [?as] she has a good ear & is very fond of it. Mrs James Gordon^[272] & I had a talk yesterday about Mr Murray's conduct to Mr Craig I wish you had heard her – when you must have been satisfied with her opinion both of Mr Craig & Mr Murray.

²⁶⁹ The letter is undated and bears no postal marking. It is difficult to place in the collection with any certainty. It was written while Lillias Craig was still absent from Ambleside, perhaps in Edinburgh. More notably, it mentions Agnes Craig going to Ambleside, which suggests a later date.

²⁷⁰ Anne Hardy (1781–1857), the eldest of the three living daughters of the Reverend Thomas Hardy D.D. (1748–1798). See the Introduction: biographical notes.

²⁷¹ Not identified.

²⁷² The Reverend James Gordon (1780–1834), minister of Borgue from 1816 to 1834. His wife was Isabella Henry.

We are all ill with colds. My father confined for a fortnight, and not yet better. My mother very ill too & none of us well and today we hear but an indifferent account of poor William who is in London and does not seem to have benefited by his journey yet. With our best wishes & love to you all

Believe me dear Mrs Craig
Sincerely & affectionately yours
M. Young

68. FROM THOMAS SHORTT TO ALEXANDER CRAIG

Tuesday Evening [*undated*]

My dear Sir,

I received yours of the 10th and was very glad to find Mrs Craig & your daughter had got home in safety, and as the journey evidently agreed with her, I trust you have succeeded in getting the chaise from Cally, and that she is frequently taken out into the open air, and hurled about as both the motion & air will be most beneficial. I sincerely trust you are following up to the full extent my urgent recommendations in regard to diet & wines. The latter is of essential service, and should be regularly given – at such intervals as to keep up its effect on the system, and I beg to impress on your mind the necessity for this, as delaying it for too long an interval, will produce a degree of debility that is sure to make you lose ground.

In giving your daughter medicines & food, I think your best way is to hand them to her without comment, or entering into any parley, and if necessary she should be given to understand by you, that this must be completed with whatever the consequences to her feelings; and when you consider that her refusal is solely the effect of disease, and that she or any body in her state, is unable to judge or decide for themselves, you will not I am sure be otherways than firm when so imperiously called on to act with decision.

Should she tire of the aloes & iron [*interlined*: or should they not produce benefit] I annex a prescription that she may use instead and if the former are continued and they do not produce any effect on the bowels, let her take 3 powders or a corresponding number of pills (if the same) three times a day instead of twice as at present. From your enclosure I am largely in your debt, and therefore beg to hear from you – at least every two or three days, as I am most anxious about her, and as she has many good symptoms I sincerely trust she will do well, and repay Mrs Craig and yourself for your unceasing anxiety on her account.

Should you be coming to Edinburgh soon I will thank you to bring me as much lineament, as will cure a dropsy of the chest, and should you not come send it me with directions. In confidence, I fear Sophy Young has symptoms of that disease, produced of course by enlarged liver.

With kind regards to all. I remain yours always

Sincerely
Thomas Shortt

R: [*illegible*]: Bismuth: alb. ʒ ij.
Tragacanth: G: Pulv:
Pulv: Aromat: [*illegible*] ʒ /
Mucilag: 2 [*illegible*] m. et divid: in pilulas
Viginta . Sig. Pills two to be given 3 times a day
Miss Craig. - T.S.

69. FROM LILLIAS CRAIG TO ANN CRAIG

Tuesday 16 December^[273]

My dear Mamma

I received yours and my uncles letter last Friday and the one [*interlined*: from] Beattock a few days before but I did not hear any thing by the coachman; do write soon and tell me if Sophia is better. I went to Mr Hogg's after you left me and next Thursday to the Christening of Mrs Allans baby who was called Agnes.^[274] Tom^[275] is as lazy as ever but the dog makes him growl and fuff more than I do so he leads a sad life between us. I like music very much. Mary asked Miss Hardy if I was not improved in it for I made more music at any rate. Give my love to Uncle James and thank him for me for his letter also to Sophy for her five words and [*illegible*] love to Papa and all my friends [*interlined*: I am] your affectionate child

Lillias Craig

²⁷³ No year was given but 16 December was a Tuesday in 1823.

²⁷⁴ Agnes Allan was born on 20 October 1823. Her parents were Robert Allan and Sophia Hardy (Note 257).

²⁷⁵ Given the context, possibly a cat.

70. FROM AN UNKNOWN PERSON TO ANN CRAIG

[*undated*]

My Dear Madam

We were very glad to receive your letter to Lillias announcing your safe arrival at home it was the more welcome that it came sooner than we calculated having supposed you would stop at [?Dumfries] you must have had a most anxious mind during such a journey but I hope and [?trust] our dear invalid has not suffered in any way from it and is long since [*four or five illegible words*] and feels better from being at home.

All friends are much as you left them. Miss Orr^[276] better but Sophy Young confined with a severe cold (in [?head]) – Mrs Young still going about her Sister Marion^[277] continuing quite well – our good neighbour Miss Shirriff^[278] was here last night making most anxious enquiries after you. [*the surviving part of the letter ends here*]

71. FROM THOMAS SHORTT TO ALEXANDER CRAIG

Edinburgh
30 December 1823

My dear Sir

I have been most gratified by the receipt of your letter and am glad to find Sophia is no worse than she was. If I had had anything further to say I should have written an answer to yours of the 19th, but I have only to urge the necessity of supporting her strength by every means in your power and as you must be now convinced that the reluctance to take food is entirely of nervous origin and [*illegible*] any ill effects it produces I trust you will most zealously continue your determination on that point. I consider the feeling in the chest as proceeding from debility and that it will vanish as she recruits in strength. I augur much therefore from the ass milk and other [*illegible*] and beg you not to forget the wine, spirits or ale as pointed out in one of my former letters. I am also desirous that the feet and legs be well rubbed as directed night &

²⁷⁶ See the Introduction: biographical notes.

²⁷⁷ Not identified.

²⁷⁸ *Post Office Directory Edinburgh 1823–24* lists a Miss Sherriff living at ‘22 Comelybank’.

morning most especially when she does not get exercise, and do not forget the use of purgatives when required. I annex two prescriptions the one is to be taken with the view of opening the bowels – the other a tonic. If No 1 is used [No] 2 may be delayed, but if No 2 is used, for No 1 substitute occasionally the rhubarb & magnesia in the dose you have already tried.

We are all quite well. Sophia Young^[279] is much better and if the lineament is not actually off keep it until I write again – if it is let me know by return of post how it is used and how often & how long applied in cases of liver and of dropsy. Tell Sophia Frank^[280] is growing a real big boy and sends her a kiss. With kind regards to Mrs Craig I remain yours. [*illegible*]

Thomas Shortt

No 1

R: aloes socot: in pulv. subt . Æij.

[*three illegible words*]: . Æi

[*three illegible words*]. Æi

Pulv: Aromat: ꝓi m et divid: in

doses viginta. Sig. Purgative powders

one to be given two or three times a day.

N° 2.

R: Oxyd: Bismuth: alb Æi.

Tragacanth – S: [pulv]: [*illegible*]

Pulv: Aromat: Æij. M et divid

in [*illegible*]; decem. Sig Tonic powders one to be

given 3 times a day in a little gruel.

TS.

²⁷⁹ See also Letter 71.

²⁸⁰ Francis Henry Shortt (b. 1822), the son of Dr Shortt and Henrietta Young.

Comely Bank
5 January 1824

My Dear Mrs Craig

Mr Mitchell^[281] leaves this to-morrow for Kirkcudbright and offers to take charge of a letter to you – Lillias would gladly avail herself of the opportunity as she is always most willing to write but she has a long epistle on the stocks for Agnes – which will employ all her spare time to-day – so I have offered to write for her – I added nothing to the last letter as she was anxious to take it herself to the post office – when finished – and I was particularly engaged at the time – she received your letter by Mr Youngs parcel last week – we are sorry to think you do not seem yet to observe improvement in Sophias health indeed at this season none can be looked for – the [?day] is turned now – and we may think of Spring again – I hope and trust she will feel its reviving influence – I have great hopes from its approach – the effect is often so wonderful on invalids it is painful to hear that resistance still continues [*illegible*] food – it is so distressing both to herself and to those around her to force the matter so frequently as is requisite – I would fain hope the ass-milk will not be so disagreeable to her as you feared upon a second trial. Will you mention when you write if she is any more reconciled to it poor Dear Girl it is hard indeed to take what is so disgusting when even the food she chuses goes [*illegible*] with such difficulty.

Lillias is quite well and happily going on, I hope improving, she proceeds nicely with her music. Miss Elouis^[282] told me last time she must make rapid progress – she was so persevering indeed her practising has not yet become a task she always proposes the piano when she has nothing else to do. Mary Young provides us with all kinds of music. We had one or two holidays such as Christmas, New Years Day, &c when she went to town with one of us and called for her friends and she has been out of an evening sometimes with us in our general visitings – the mild weather allows us to do this without danger of cold. Miss Hogg called here the other day very anxious to hear of you – her friend Miss Brown^[283] was here one day. She seems a fine girl – I mean to ask her to spend a Saturday with Lillias soon – the Youngs are all well, Sophy^[284] has

²⁸¹ Possibly the same individual who is mentioned in Letter 82b.

²⁸² Mary Anne Elouis (b. c.1801) was a daughter of John Elouis, a French or Swiss harpist who had moved to Edinburgh in 1805 and made his fortune teaching the instrument to fashionable young ladies. She had been taught to play the pianoforte by the German composer Ferdinand Ries, and she later gave both recitals and lessons on the instrument. At the time of this letter, her address was 2 Stafford Street, Edinburgh.

²⁸³ Not identified.

²⁸⁴ Sophia Young (Note 184).

recovered from her cold but ~~is~~ is just in her usual feckless state confined to the house and looking very languid but in good enough spirits – the rest are all well. Mr Y. was at Harburn for some days last week. Miss Orr is continuing better. Mr Balfour pretty well but still threatened with his complaint upon the least cold.

My brother was here yesterday, his wife and little boy^[285] are [?both finely]. Mrs [*illegible*] was in the dining room on New Years day. You will be glad to know that Marion Forrester^[286] continues quite well able to see most of her friends there seems to be no fear of any relapse now she called here lately it was truly gratifying to contrast her state with what it was at [*illegible*]. We had a visit from John Fraser and J Campbell on Saturday Evening. Fraser left the [*illegible*] at M Andrews [*illegible*] setting off to spend the Holiday with Mr C Buchanan^[287] tell Sophia that Pussy continues in high favour poor tom his mistress's holidays were none to him – he is teased as much as ever.

We shall be anxious to hear of your invalid and glad of accounts from time to time. Lillias desires kindest love to you to her Father and Sophia. Jessie joins [?her in] kind remembrances.

I remain My Dear Mrs Craig
Yours Ever truly
A Hardy

73. FROM THOMAS SHORTT TO ALEXANDER CRAIG

Edinburgh
8 January 1824

My dear Sir

I have just received your letter of the 5th and regret to find that our patient is not going on so well. The pain she complains of is evidently an affection of the muscular [?fibres] of the stomach and I trust can readily be relieved. To this end she should recommence the tonic powders or pills of iron or bismuth and if she will take a teaspoonful of brandy about a quarter of an hour before the milk it

²⁸⁵ Thomas Hardy (1824-1910), the son of Thomas Hardy and Robina Forrester.

²⁸⁶ Marion Forrester (1793-1862), daughter of Robert Forrester and Henrietta Porteous. Her father was for many years treasurer to the Bank of Scotland.

²⁸⁷ None of the names in this paragraph can be identified with certainty. Buchanan, however, might possibly be the same person as the author of Letter 94.

will be of service. Should this fail 4 or 5 drops of laudanum given at the same time may be tried and a blister if the former plan should fail. I say former meaning the tonic & brandy as I am averse to the opium for fear of shutting up the bowels. If the blister is applied the surface [*interlined*: of it] is to be sprinkled with camphor (powdered) and if it gives pain the usual mode of dressing [?]by ointment the application of a bread and milk poultice will soothe the burning sensation that is often felt. With kind regards to all and in hopes of hearing from you in a few days. I remain

in great haste
yours faithfully
Thomas Shortt

74. FROM SUSAN MURRAY TO SOPHIA CRAIG

Ruthwell
14 January 1824

My dearest Sophia

We were very much delighted to hear that you were rather better, & hope & trust that you will soon get well. I am glad you received the books safe, I put up in that parcel everything which I could lay my hands on which belongs to you except your Table of Verbs, but that, I took into my own possession as I thought I could not put it in the parcel without spoiling it as it was so large, but it is quite safe.

We were in Dumfries on Monday where we met Miss Melville in the street. I think I told you before that all the young ladies went home at Christmas except Julia, who is quite well & desired to be particularly remembered to you. Fellow has been tormenting me all this last half year about "Oh! Susan. Be sure to remember to give my love to my dear Soph." So whenever he showed any contempt of my suppressive authority, I punished him by saying, that I would forget to give you his love, which enraged him greatly. Anne [?Naught] did not come back to school after Midsummer, on account of a weakness in her back she was growing so fast. Jane came in her place, who is a very nice little girl & very like Nanny. I hope however Nan will be able to come next time. I shall feel a great want of you & Colina & if Anne does not return I shall have nobody to compensate for your loss. A great many of your old companions have left school, Miss Parker & Miss [*illegible*] left at Xmas. Miss [*illegible*] got the ~~first~~ 2nd French prize and will go into the 1st class next half year she also got the

Music Prize. Sophy White got the Ladylike Prize. Miss Wilson went away at the quarter. I saw her in Carlisle on my way here. Little Agnes is downstairs with Miss [*illegible*] & Barbara learning her lessons, she begged me to give her affectionate love to you & Papa & Mamma. She received a letter from Lily Ass a few days ago (who is quite well) with which she was highly delighted & a book, entitled "A Trip to Paris".^[288] Either Agnes or I will write to Lil soon. The time is fast approaching when ~~when~~ we shall have to leave all our friends, to go back to Miss Dowling's. This last half year passed away like a shadow, & I am afraid the next one will too.

Mary Anne is quite well she desires her kind love to you. I shall take special care to make all the necessary apologies to Aunty Lill about her book which I hope she will receive graciously, I shall likewise look after all your other things which remain at Ambleside and send them the first opportunity.

Colonel Campbell & family are at Halleaths^[289] but I am afraid that I shall not see them till they return to Grasmere. Colina you know will not return. We are all well here, George has just returned to Kirkcudbright. John had a letter the other day from Alex in India who is quite well. I am afraid I must conclude my epistle, as I have nothing more to say, with the affectionate love of all here to which is joined that of your ever, truly Affectionate Cousin

Susan

I forgot to tell you that Miss Dowling is going to be married to Mr Carr at the quarter so we [*page damaged*] from Lillias in her letter to Agnes. Oh we shall be glad to see you when you come to Ambleside in Summer. I am sure Tom will be out of his wits at least out of all sense he has any pretensions to but alas that will be but ~~few~~ little – Goodbye.

²⁸⁸ Possibly *A Trip to Paris in July and August 1792* by Richard Twiss.

²⁸⁹ *Pigot's Directory 1825-26* lists Andrew Johnstone of Halleaths among the 'Gentry and Clergy' of the parish of Lochmaben, Dumfriesshire. He is listed as a principal landowner in the *Second Statistical Account*, and in the 1851 Census he is recorded as farming 100 acres. A memorial inscription in Lochmaben kirkyard records the death of an Andrew Johnstone of Halleaths on 27 April 1857, aged fifty-nine.

75. FROM HENRY DUNCAN TO SOPHIA CRAIG

[*undated*]

My dearest Sophia,

Tell your father that I hear Charles Thomson^[290] has an eagle of which he is beginning to tire. If this is the case I should take it as a personal favour that he would let me have it to give to John Murray who has a collection of live as well as dead birds.

I have all the inclination in the world to accept of your father's invitation & see you in two or three weeks. My Sacrament is on Sabbath week & I have a meeting on 9th February which I must attend – but either before the 9th February or after it very soon I will endeavour to pay you a visit of a few days. God bless you my dearest girl

[?Always]

Uncle Henry

76. FROM THOMAS SHORTT TO ALEXANDER CRAIG

Edinburgh
27 January 1824

My dear Sir

I was truly grieved by the contents of your letter of Saturday and from the accounts therein contained apprehend much. I will thank you to request Mr Rae to trace the [?line] from the pit of the stomach along the margin of the false ribs and to ascertain if there is at present any enlargement of that viscus and if pressure occasions pain. If so, I beg you to apply a mustard poultice over the pit of the stomach and along the margin of the ribs if there is either enlargement or pain and to continue it as many minutes as she can bear it. It will not break the skin and in her present state may be better than a blister which I presume has not been applied.

It appears to me that the complaint is confined chiefly to the digestive organs chiefly the the [*sic*] stomach and liver. Little trace however may be seen for if the stomach was materially injured there would be many symptoms such

²⁹⁰ Not identified.

as vomiting &c. that are now wanting. From having been little used lately I conceive it must have greatly contracted and the pain occasioned by the introduction of food is caused by distention.

There was no organic disease when Sophia left this, it may now however have taken place but to no great extent as her reduced state will allow you at once to ascertain if there is any enlargement of the liver. At that time a derangement of function alone existed, but I fear now, from your description that it is organically affected.

If this is the case and which Mr Rae will inform you, if able to bear it let mercury by friction be tried in addition to the above, and if possible support her with cordials. You may try the effect of porter in small quantities which will be a change as I think you have not used it and soup may be thrown up by injection with a few drops of laudanum added to secure its being retained. However unpromising symptoms are do something, you may be useful and if you do no good you will have the great satisfaction left of having tried every means of relief.

I beg you to remember us most kindly to Mrs Craig with whom and yourself we sincerely sympathize. I will thank you to write in a very few days and believe me

My dear Sir
Yours faithfully
Thomas Shortt

77A. FROM LILLIAS CRAIG TO SOPHIA CRAIG

28 January 1824

My dear sister

I was sorry to learn from Mamma's letter that you were not any better and I am now anxious to hear again as I hope by this time you will be getting better. Miss Allan has been staying with us for a few days but she will soon be going away and I do not think I will have another companion before Barbara. I dined with the Miss Hardys at Queen Street some days ago Miss Sophy was not able to leave her bed but I do not know how she is now. Miss Orr was here lately she asked very particularly after you and desired to be kindly remembered to you all both her and [?Mrs] Balfour continue very delicate. If you are able in the Spring I wish you could get a few cowslip roots to plant before the parlour window and if you could take a little interest in what is going on I am sure it

would do you good. Mrs Hardy is unwell with a bilious attack just [*interlined:* now] but her baby is well. Write a few words to me in the next letter and give my love to all my friends. I remain your affectionate sister

Lillias Craig

77B. FROM ANNE HARDY TO ANN CRAIG

My Dear Mrs Craig^[291]

Lillias has been very anxious for some days to write to her sister and tho' I fear it would only give her trouble to read it I had not the heart to distress her by saying any thing against her doing it. We had your letter last week and are grieved indeed at the [?tenor] of it.

Lillias is quite well, she has a companion, my sister's eldest girl is with us just now for change of air. Lillias is much the better of her – they seem to be good friends. I hope she will form a permanent one soon [?in a] little [?person] about her own [*interlined:* age] of whom we heard to-day from the country – I trust she will be a desirable companion for our dear girl.

My warmest prayers are with you all. May you have every support and assistance in your most trying duty.

Most affectionately yours
A Hardy

78. FROM THOMAS SHORTT TO ALEXANDER CRAIG

10 South Castle Street, Edinburgh
10 February^[292]

My dear Sir

I received this morning yours of the 7th instant^[293] and after maturely considering its contents I am still of opinion as formerly expressed that the pain in the stomach arises from the irritability of the muscular [?coats] of that organ.

²⁹¹ This note was written by Anne Hardy in the margin of page two of Letter 77a.

²⁹² No year was given.

²⁹³ *i.e.* 7 February.

This disease is often attended with sympathetic headache, the tongue being covered with a white mucus towards the root and I consider the anguish Sophia complains of as occasioned by the same irritability extending to the other muscular parts. If there was organic disease of the stomach the pain would be constant. If [*illegible*] it would surely have been ere this ascertained. If stricture of the upper orifice of the stomach it would have been one of the first symptoms of her complaint and these are the only diseases it can be confounded with. I believe the stomach to be contracted and thickened from its never being of late dilated and therefore distension must now cause pain.

To remove this unpleasant sensation therefore I would strongly urge the application of a small blister to the pit of the stomach and I would at the same time try the effects of a teaspoonful of brandy given half an hour before each meal and if the brandy fails 5 drops of laudanum should certainly be given in the same manner – the opium will interfere a little with the bowels but it is of less consequence in the present state of things and I would not give purgatives above once or twice a week. To strengthen the stomach and general [?frame] I enclose you a highly tonic medicine 5 grains of which may be given 2 or 3 times a day in the [?rye] porridge and as it has no taste or smell Sophia may not be told of it. Should you continue the injections they should certainly be repeated as Mr Rae directs while the stomach is in a state to receive food. The injections should be retained as long as possible and to ensure this should be [?thrown up] in small quantities.

I beg you to put these directions into immediate use and when you next write let me know the state of the pulse and nature of the evacuations from the bowels. With best regards to Mrs Craig I remain

My dear Sir
Yours Most Sincerely
Thomas Shortt

79. FROM THOMAS SHORTT TO ALEXANDER CRAIG

Tuesday morning [February 1824]^[294]

My dear Sir

In reply to yours of Sunday I think I may safely pronounce that the tonic is not the cause of your daughters sufferings, and that the discharge from the bowels described by you was entirely mucous in an inspissated state from lying long in

²⁹⁴ No date was given but the letter was addressed '17. Feb 1824/Dr Shortt'.

the intestines. I regret much that there is no change in the complaint and much wish you had adopted the remedies pointed out in my last as I think relief from pain at least would have followed. The tonic you might most safely have exhibited as it would have produced no disagreeable effect and might have relieved the weakness and languor she suffers from. Your accounts are so bad that I much fear our endeavours will be unavailing but I still urge you to try every suggestion that is likely to produce benefit and in hopes of hearing from you in a few days

I remain
Yours most faithfully
Thomas Shortt

80. FROM THOMAS SHORTT TO ALEXANDER CRAIG

Saturday evening [April 1824]^[295]

My dear Sir,

I was truly glad to find from your last that you were going on so well but I fear you are rather exceeding in diet. Sophia is unable to take exercise and from the very weak state of the stomach it is impossible for her to get well through so much particularly without medicine. As to the pulse I consider it kept up by debility and it will diminish in frequency as [*illegible*]. Should the headaches be troublesome I would recommend you to try the effect of the Sulphates of Quinin[e] a concentrated preparation of Bark in doses of two grams in pills with Extract of Gentian three times a day. This will considerably increase her strength and is more likely to remove the headaches than any [*interlined: thing*] I know of in her present state. It succeeded miraculously with a young lady of 13 years of age who had been long a sufferer and it brought on a discharge from the uterus, a circumstance much desired with Sophia and which will no doubt appear when she has gained strength. Should you be inclined at the recommendation of Mr Rae to try it if he has it not I will send it you from Edinburgh and in the meantime you can use the tonic powders formerly sent you which is almost as [*illegible*] in pains of the stomach.

You have now many advantages with you and fine weather near at hand therefore go on with caution and do not undo the progress you have made.

²⁹⁵ No year was given but the letter was stamped 25 April 1824 and was so addressed.

Frank sends his love to Sophia also her little namesake,^[296] who I expect is to be a greater favourite with her than our Frank and hope they will soon meet, and with best regards to Mrs Craig

I remain
Yours faithfully
Thomas Shortt

81. FROM ANN CRAIG TO ALEXANDER CRAIG

Sunday morning [May 1824]^[297]

My dearest

At ten the night of your departure I gave Sophia 8 grains of Calomel; she was much distressed the whole night, nor did the doze begin to operate until 7 in the morning, it was then very brisk for 5 times bringing away much bad stuff, and towards the evening after a short drive it again operated, when the discharge was more like (in colour and consistence) chopped parsley than anything else; yesterday I am sorry to say no change either for better or worse could be observed upon her; she was equally feeble and heartless till evening when she became more energetic, the heat was excessive, yet she rode out both forenoon and afternoon; in the evening it thundered heavily and incessantly for an hour both in east and west, but no rain, and to day we have [?brisk] east wind which makes everything look dismal. Mary^[298] went away yesterday but Anne promises tolerably only, we cause Sandy carry Sophia as she is frightened for Anne failing in strength. By the bye I fear our arrow root may fail us before we get a fresh supply from Mrs Keith^[299] could you bring me a pound from Dumfries. There are two letters come, one from Edinboro [*i.e.* Edinburgh] and one from Liverpool; no body has looked near us except Drumwall, by hints from him I understand we are proscribed. I learned from the servants that Bainton^[300] is at present deranged that his family are much afflicted and constantly keeping

²⁹⁶ Dr Shortt's daughter Sophia. She was baptized on 27 October 1823 at St Cuthbert's, Edinburgh.

²⁹⁷ No date was given but the letter was addorsed '30 May 1824/My Wife'. She had sent it 'Care of Mr McDiarmid, Dumfries'. For McDiarmid, see Note 217.

²⁹⁸ Mary, Sandy and Anne were possibly all servants.

²⁹⁹ Not identified.

³⁰⁰ See also Letter 9.

watch over him, if so it is lamentable. I hope you will not fail being at Ruthwell and settling my various debts, it would be most agreeable could brother Henry accompany you back it is long since he has been here I am sure nothing could give me more pleasure than to see him. I trust you will find Bab improving. Agnes and I are quite well, remember us most affectionately to them all. I have not a single word from Cairnsmoor. Agnes and I are in our [*page damaged – two lines*] I am my dearest longing [to] hear from you, and am your most affectionate Wife

A Craig

82A. FROM AGNES DUNCAN TO SOPHIA CRAIG

Ruthwell
19 August 1824^[301]

My dear Sophia,

I was right glad to see my wee man again, I had gone up after tea to see Mrs Frazer poor body [*interlined*: when he popt in upon me] she is in great affliction about her sister who is very seriously ill, and with whom she has long been on bad terms which aggravates her distress. Your Uncle was much better for two days before he went away which was on Tuesday. I feel satisfied that I succeeded in getting him away to Gilsland,^[302] having so often found the benefit of change of air myself. I join George John in urging you to pluck up courage and come down to us – or if you think this too far – to go somewhere before the weather gets cold, [?theres] poor Jessie Laidlaw,^[303] who had lain on her back for three years, thought it impossible to move but was urged last year to try a short distance which she made out with the utmost difficulty and great suffering she remained six weeks from home, and from that time she has gradually recovered. She has tried again this season and tho all the [?coughs] she had got thro the winter was to get into an arm chair & sit for an hour in the day she has so far recovered again since she left home as to be able to walk out a little every day, the three years she remained [*illegible*] wholly at home, she never made the smallest progress in gaining strength – now my dearest girl let me urge you to

³⁰¹ The letter bears a Dumfries postmark of 20 August 1824. It was addressed to ‘Miss Craig/Syllodioch/Gatehouse’.

³⁰² On the coast near North Berwick, East Lothian.

³⁰³ Not identified.

try and tho it is painful consider it a duty and I am sure you would be able to accomplish it. Poor Jessie had no kind father or mother to facilitate her moving but for [?sake] of her poor sisters she considered it her duty to try, and I hope & trust God will bless the exertions she has made.

I feel so confident that [a] change of air will strengthen your feeble frame, that I would carry you on a barrow, rather than let you remain longer at home. The season is drawing to a close do not my darling child make objections but summon up all your fortitude (I know you have your share of that virtue) and make a fair trial of a few weeks any where you like to go – send my dear wee lassie back to us if you think you cannot accompany her hither. Wallace has a strong wish still to go and see you, but I hope it will be here you will meet – poor fellow! He has been a very good boy and most attentive in Mr Dow's^[304] absence to the little boys left in his charge – he sends his love and says if no better way can be found of transporting you, he has a good broad back which shall be at your service, and a pair [of] long strong shoulders, ~~which~~ I expect your Uncles stay at Gilsland will not be above a week now I shall not close this till the post comes, as it is possible I may hear tonight from him.

Your Affectionate Aunt
Agnes Duncan

82B. FROM GEORGE JOHN CRAIG DUNCAN TO SOPHIA CRAIG

Ruthwell
19 August 1824

I arrived here last night about five and twenty minutes past nine.^[305] Yesterday morning I spent in breakfasting with Mr Mitchell^[306] in Kirkcudbright, examining the scenery, and walking to the road to meet the Mail. I think the scenery about Kirkcudbright very fine, but I cannot help admiring the view up the Fleet still more. We arrived at Dumfries a little before six, from whence, after getting my hair cut [*illegible*] I proceeded on foot homewards.

I called on Mrs Fraser to deliver a letter I brought from Dumfries. Here I met my Mother, my cousin Isabella,^[307] and Wallace, all in good health. Mary Anne looked well and so did Helen, but Mrs Fraser was not very well.

³⁰⁴ Possibly a master in Duncan's school at Ruthwell Manse.

³⁰⁵ George John Craig Duncan cross-wrote his note to Sophia Craig over Letter 81a.

³⁰⁶ *Pigot's Directory 1825-26* lists a John Mitchell as the proprietor of a day academy in Castle Street, Kirkcudbright.

³⁰⁷ Not identified.

All of them asked kindly for you. I have not yet delivered your letter and book, but I shall do so as soon as my trunk arrives from Dumfries. My mother tells me my father was seriously ill; he is better now I am happy to say, and has gone to Gilsland, with Uncles George and Tom,^[308] besides my cousin Anne. My mother does not know when he will be home but hopes to hear from him tonight as they left this on Tuesday. Barbara is looking remarkably well and I only wish you would pluck up a little strength that you might come and see us. Plunge^[309] was at Clarencefield with the rest, and knew me immediately he is lying at my side drying, for he has been swimming in the pond. Wallace has taught him (besides his other tricks) to shut the door, and ring the bell for school.

Kind love to my Uncle and Aunt and believe me

your affectionate Cousin
George John Craig Duncan

(You must excuse all defects in writing)

thursday evening

My mother has just heard from my father who is pretty well and writes in good spirits.

[?still] George Duncan

83. FROM 'BROTHER BEAUPRÈS' TO SOPHIA CRAIG

6 September [1824]^[310]

My beloved Brother Beauprès –

I received your welcome epistle today, & you see, I lose no time in answering it. I was very sorry to understand my dear Brother that your health has not been good enough to allow you to continue your favourite occupation, indeed, to say the truth I have not had any pupils myself, except Miss Lillias Craig, to

³⁰⁸ George Duncan, the oldest brother of the Reverend Henry Duncan, and Thomas Tudor Duncan (Note 4).

³⁰⁹ Presumably a dog.

³¹⁰ No year was given but the postmark states 6 September 1824. It was marked 'Post Paid'. The identity of the author of this schoolgirl *jeu d'esprit* is uncertain. The letter is addressed to 'Mons Beauprès Professor of Parisian Dancing Syllodioch Parish of Girthon'.

whom I was endeavouring to teach that justly celebrated dance, The Gavotte de Vestris.^[311] But really I was quite discouraged from proceeding any further for she is so exceedingly [*illegible*] in all her motions that I am very much afraid she will never be able to dance with half the grace [*interlined: that*] either you or I used to display in our sailor's hornpipe – which in truth was a most charming dance. I hope you duly received our letter by Miss Brown for the last one we received from you, which was after we had written that you expressed a wish that I would join in Lillias letters as often as I could.^[312] So thinks I to myself. '*illegible* my dear [*illegible*] when you've got that, so far from wishing any more of our scrawls you would think yourself well off when you had got thro' that which was not a very easy business you would perceive. We went a voyage in the steam boat last Saturday week over the Firth to a place called Aberdour in the south of Fife – we set off at five in the morning & returned at eight at night we were all sick coming back. I am in a great hurry as you may perceive for I have a newspaper to finish tonight to send to Ruthwell by your papa who goes to Harburn tomorrow morning.

I shall take some other opportunity of telling you all my news which are very numerous but must finish just now with love to you all & hopes you will soon recover your strength from your affectionate Brother Beauprès

It is late at night & I have a great deal to do. So excuse all blots mistakes bad writing &a – Good Night

84. FROM ANN CRAIG TO ALEXANDER CRAIG

Syllodioch
12 September 1824

My dearest

We are wearying sadly at your long silence, last night I sat up till 11, fully expecting your return but was disappointed. Sophia continues without alteration, she has had one doze of salts since your departure, which she considered affected her too slightly, nevertheless she was rendered by them extremely feeble; tho' the weather has not been very settled she has been regularly able to go out except yesterday afternoon when it was a perfect tempest. Agnes and I are in our usual. Last Wednesday I had a note from Cally

³¹¹ Auguste Vestris (1760-1842) was a highly acclaimed dancer at the Paris Opera.

³¹² The following words, as far as 'perceive', are particularly difficult to decipher, as is the punctuation.

enquiring after your motions. I replied I could not tell, but hoped you would be home upon Saturday. Yesterday I was surprised by a call from Mr Murray he was cordial with me and sat a full half hour, he expressed great anxiety for your return saying he had no doubt he and you could after a little conversation, settle all matters without the interference of any third person whatever, that he deprecated the idea of any legal proceedings, and begged if you did not arrive per Mail I could try if a letter could not find you some where, and hasten you back. I told him I would write to you at Dumfries that in the event of your passing through to Dr Duncans you might have a chance of getting my letter and regulating your motions accordingly. Sandy is just come but no word of you, Nells [*illegible*] face is much lengthened, and [*?Agnes cries*] I fear she is not well. I shall address this to the care of Mr McDiarmid^[313] and trusting we shall soon see you I remain your truly affectionate Wife

A Craig

85. FROM ANN CRAIG TO ALEXANDER CRAIG

28 September [1824]

My dearest

This mornings post brought you a letter from the agent of the Bank of Scotland in Dumfries, announcing that your bill to Mr Farish is protected, the letter is dated the 27th September, I think it right to inform you thereof, perhaps I ought to send you the letter but I am so ignorant of business and grudge increasing postage if needlessly. There is also a letter come today from Mr Young who does not appear perfectly satisfied with you, which renders me very heartbroken, but I know you will not fail to write when you have any thing to communicate, may God strength[en] you, you are placed in difficult circumstances and will not be the first good man whom the wicked have overpowered there is also a letter from Mr M Stewart and another from Henry inclosing a bill for £50. Sophia is poorly but I do not think much worse than when you saw her; this severe weather no doubt affects her, the ice this morning is fully as thick as a penny piece. Mrs McKean arrived last night she is much disappointed at missing you; she and Agnes are gone out to walk the day being dry but very cold. Miss Smith came and spent the day with me yesterday. I have heard no word of C Thomson other than [*interlined: that*] James as I felt assured would be the case refused to accompany Charles as a friend against the great man, and poor C is

³¹³ The letter was addressed to 'Alex Craig Esq., care of John McDiarmid Esq., Courier Office, Dumfries'.

much hurt thereat; indeed I fear single handed he would be no match against Brown and Nish, but my sister had heard nothing of there [*i.e.* their] settlement, only of James's refusal to take a part for Charles, which tho' I expected would be the case, the certainty hurts my feelings.

I have no news to record, every thing is going on carefully under Sandy, who being busy dispatching the honey to Edinburgh was too late to admit of my writing by this days post after he came.

My blessing to Lill to whom there is a volume of hymns come from Miss Miligan. I wrote to Captain McKerlie last night telling him of your absence but that the gentleman would take the poney at 30 guineas provided it would be sent in to Edinburgh at moderate expense and saying I had no doubt he and you would arrange every thing on your return but I thought it best to say the poney was as good as bought lest in the autumn another merchant might offer. My most respectful compliments to the family you are with and with dearest love to yourself I remain your

truly affectionate Wife
Ann Craig

4 Oclock

Mr Jeffrey came at 12 and is kindly spending the day with me he sends you best wishes, as does my Sister.

86A. FROM WILLIAM MAXWELL TO HENRY DUNCAN

Dumfries
10 December 1824

Dear Sir^[314]

It gives me much pleasure to learn that Mrs Duncan is so well. Miss Craig is better than I expected [*page damaged – two lines*] in respect to disease, but [*two lines illegible – ink faded*] is perhaps the most alarming C[*illegible*] of her [*illegible*]. Miss C[*illegible*]^[315] [*two words illegible*] appears to have [*two words illegible*] from the judicious [?perseverance] in the [?use] of injections & the expectation of a visit from her sister. There is a fullness in the seat, or nearly so

³¹⁴ The letter is faint and in an extremely difficult hand, which is disfigured by numerous blots and scratchings out. A great deal of it has thus proved undecipherable.

³¹⁵ The undeciphered surname is too long to be 'Craig' and may be that of another patient at Ruthwell.

of the spleen. Mr Craig tells me that in S[?pring] there [?was] the same hardness along the whole belly, which was [*several words illegible*], all may do well if the young lady exert herself.

I am Dear Sir
Sincerely
William Maxwell^[316]

86B. FROM AGNES DUNCAN TO ALEXANDER CRAIG

My dear Brother^[317]

I am thankful to say I have been out of bed to breakfast yesterday and today and am gaining strength daily. I send this letter of Dr Maxwell's to Henry, you know I have reason to have confidence in his opinion, let us not yeild to dispair my beloved brother. I would fain hope our dear child [*page damaged – two lines*] yet be restored to health. [*page damaged*] strength you have reason to trust the almighty [*page damaged*] that brings to the gates of Death and restores again, when we least expect it – you will be glad to hear our acct's of your and our dear girl [?are] most comfortable. The boys too are well with most affectionate love to you both and [*illegible*] darling children I ever am My dearest brother & sister

Yours
AD

³¹⁶ *Pigot's Directory 1825-26* lists two medical William Maxwells in Dumfries: one a physician in Castle Street, the other a surgeon at 54 High Street.

³¹⁷ The first page of Dr Maxwell's letter (Letter 86a) was over-written by Agnes Duncan in forwarding it to Alexander Craig at Syllodioch, Gatehouse. The original letter bears a Dumfries three-line postal marking for the morning of 10 December 1824 and the forwarded letter a three-line Dumfries postal marking for the afternoon of 11 December 1824.

87. FROM THOMAS SHORTT TO ALEXANDER CRAIG

10 South Castle Street, Edinburgh
22 December 1824^[318]

From the information received yesterday regarding your daughter, I am still of opinion that neither the liver, nor spleen are diseased – but it appears since I saw her that she has had an attack of inflammation of the mucous membrane lining the stomach and small intestines, which disease still exists in a chronic state!

Upon the whole however there is an amelioration of symptoms since last year and notwithstanding the case being almost desperate, from the long continuance of severe disease yet I confess I am not without hope of ultimate recovery!

The danger at present to be feared is ulceration of the stomach and intestines, to obviate which I would thoroughly recommend a trial of Java Pepper in doses of two scruples morning and evening, as being a medicine of real power in all the diseases of secreting surfaces, and which I have used with most decided benefit in such cases. I fear – however – your daughter may not be persuaded to give it a trial, and in this case you must trust chiefly to diet which should consist at present solely of milk, whey, gruel, arrow root and bread or biscuits. The tepid salt bath may be used to induce sleep at bed time, to restore the balance of the circulation, at present determined to the interior, and to increase the strength. The bowels should be cleared by small doses of castor oil, and aided by occasional injections when necessary!

Thomas Shortt M.D.

88A. FROM LILIAS CRAIG TO SOPHIA CRAIG

Friday 24 December 1824^[319]

My dearest Sophy

We have ~~performed~~ executed all your commissions but Papa did not tell us you wished the tambour needle like Miss Marys till we had bought an ivory one,

³¹⁸ The letter was addressed to ‘Alexander Craig Esq.’ There are no postal markings, so it might have been an enclosure in other correspondence. It was addorsed ‘22nd December 1824/Dr Shortt’. Note the lack of any opening greeting.

³¹⁹ There are no postal markings on this letter, which was clearly enclosed in a larger parcel. The letter is addressed ‘Miss Craig/Syllodioch’.

there are two needles in the inside of the case and they seem nice ones so I hope they will please you. One skein of silk would not be enough for a purse so we send two; one of them is a present from me. Miss Jessie is much better though still very poorly and Miss L Orr^[320] too is better poor Tommy Hardy^[321] is very ill with teething he will not eat and is grown quite pale and thin. Mr and Mrs Hardy are quite well so are all the rest of our friends except Mr Young but Papa will tell you about him. Mary Young was down here last Wednesday and heard us all play she said I was a good deal improved at which I was very glad. We are all going to Mrs Allans [*interlined*: to dinner] tomorrow except Barbara who has such a number of calls to make that she will be too late to go when she comes back she is writing a letter to her Mother beside me just now and says the reason she cannot go is because she was previously invited to dine and stay all night at Mr Mackays but she has such a number of places to go to that I can't recollect them. Mrs McLauchlan is in town. Susan, Agnes and I are going to see her but like every thing else it is put off till next week which is our Christmas Holydays. Mrs Campbell is quite well again. I do not know when she comes to town.

Monday 27 December

I wish you a happy new year Dear Sophia when it comes and hope you had a merry Christmas as that is all I can do since it is past. As Saturday was very bad we all clubbed together and took a coach, there were seven of us and another lady who went a little way with us so you may think what a coachful we had. We walked home in the evening as it was fine after having spent a very happy day at Mrs Allans. Barbara was to have returned today but it is so bad I fear Miss Hardy will not get for her.

Monday evening

Henry Murray is downstairs and I am all alone in the parlour. Barbara did not get down today it was so bad. I send you my drawing book but I am sure you will say when you see it that I ~~never~~ shall never draw. There are prizes to be given for various things in a short time but I don't know when.

Tuesday morning

We were not expecting Miss Elouis this morning as ~~it~~ this week is a holyday ~~over~~ in all the schools. I had gone into Susan and Agnes's bed and we were indulging ourselves in an extra nap when lo! the door bell rang and in an instant we were in the middle of the floor. Annie came with a face of consternation to tell us Miss Elouis was come, we with great expedition shoveled on Susans

³²⁰ Louisa Orr (Note 154).

³²¹ Thomas Hardy (Note 247).

cloathes and in about five minutes she was down stairs playing her lesson where she is at present.

(After Breakfast)

there is a letter from Wallace to Barbara which we have opened as it was charged double postage they are quite well, Wallaces heels quite recovered but they do not come to town this Christmas. The patterns are all for muslin but if you wish for lace I will get you some.

Wednesday 29 December

We are just come back from Mrs McLauchlans she was quite well and desired me to remember her [*interlined*: to] you. Mrs Campbell comes to town in about a fortnight with all her family except Johny who remains at Applegarth with Mr Dunbar.^[322] Colina was quite well when she heard last and very happy at school. I hope my dear Sophia you are still keeping free from colds as that is all I can expect in this bad weather. Give a kiss from me to Mamma and Agnes with best love to them and all my friends. I remain dearest Sophia your very affectionate Sister

Lillias Craig

88B. FROM ANNE HARDY TO SOPHIA CRAIG

My dearest Sophy^[323] – I just write a few words to explain some of the packets enclosed. Lill sends your [?Mamma] a frill with some white ribbon to [*illegible*] it up with. [?We] send you a box of [?compressed rheubarb pills] which are particularly fine. I send you a little pin cushion & needle books of my own making. Good Bye My dearest –

³²² The Reverend William Dunbar D.D. (c.1779-1861), minister of Applegarth from 1807 to 1861.

³²³ This addendum was written on the flap of the letter, almost certainly by Miss Anne Hardy, whose hand is recognisable by her use of the 'long s'.

89. FROM SUSAN MURRAY TO SOPHIA CRAIG

29 December 1824^[324]

My dear Sophy

I wish you many a merry Christmas & happy New Year. I have very little time to say anything & Lillias will have told you all the news – I hope all your commissions are executed to your taste. I think an ivory tambour needle is greatly preferable to an iron one for convenience. It is much easier to hold. I send you the chronological table you wanted, I hope you will find it copious enough. I send you a drawing also – it is very ill done, but you must excuse all defects. How does Agnes come on in her various studies? Tell her I was very much obliged to her for her nice letter it was very well written.

Excuse this short and hurried epistle as I am in a great haste. Love to Agnes and believe me your sincerely affectionate

Cousin Susan

I am painting a chessboard for Henry, in black & white.

90. FROM THOMAS SHORTT TO ALEXANDER CRAIG

27 January [1825]^[325]
9 P.M.

My dear Sir

I have this instant [?received] your letter to Mr Young of the 26th & regret extremely to find Sophia has had so serious an attack. I can only urge you to put typhus out of the question – support her strength as much as lies in your power, without interfering with the stomach. Give as much nourishment as you can by injection and try to lessen the acidity [*illegible*]ted by the green [*illegible*] by prescription No 1 but if the stomach will not bear it the [*illegible*] mixture

³²⁴ There are no postal markings on the letter, which was presumably enclosed in another letter or package. It was addressed to 'Miss Craig/Syllodioch'.

³²⁵ The letter bears a circular date stamp for 28 January 1825 and was addressed to Alexander Craig at Cally. It contains two prescriptions, headed 'No. 1' and 'No. 2'. These are not transcribed, since they are among the least legible parts of an extremely poorly written letter. The first ends with the words, 'A tablespoonful every two hours till it operates' and the second with '... when there is nausea'.

N^o 2 will lessen the instability of that organ. If the heat is above the natural temperature sponge with tepid vinegar [?water] – and lose no means untried to support the strength. Bark however is out of the question except the [?shape] I sent you some time ago. To relieve the instability of stomach small quantities of brandy & water hot may be given that is in teaspoonfuls – ass milk will also be useful in same quantities – a piece of flannel soaked in anodyne [*illegible*] of any kind and applied to the pit of the stomach will also be of use, but the main point is to support the strength in her weak state & if possible to act on the bowels gently. I will write tomorrow as this has barely time to reach the post office before it shuts. In haste

[*three illegible words*]

Thomas Shortt

91. FROM THOMAS SHORTT TO ALEXANDER CRAIG

29 January [1825]^[326]

My dear Sir

I wrote you two nights ago and would have done last night if anything had occurred to me in addition, & if I had not expected to hear from you tonight from your letter to Mr Young. In this I have not been disappointed and I rejoice extremely to find Sophia is better. Put typhus & putridity out of the question, which must alarm, as no such thing can exist, & consider Sophias attack as purely bilious which it is and support her strength through it and endeavour besides to mitigate any unpleasant symptom that may present itself, and thereby prevent her [*illegible*]ting which at present is all you have to consider. In regard to Dr Maxwells pills I highly approve of them, but the dose should be very small in her present state, if the blue pills, not more than [*i.e.* than] 1 grain morning & evening, as more would be [*four illegible words*]. I should [*illegible*] the pills sent would be about 4 [?grains] each therefore you can act accordingly and in the small dose they may be continued for several days if the mouth is not affected which I cannot exactly ascertain from your letter. Interfere with the stomach as little as possible – clean out the bowels by injecting & [*illegible*] up food in the [?usual] way adding to the latter a few drops of laudanum that it may be retained – give her wine or brandy & water as she can bear it, & do not let her be more than [*i.e.* than] 4 hours or at farthest 6 without nourishment. In

³²⁶ No year is given although the addorsement records that it was sent from Edinburgh on 29 January 1825 (and was received and replied to two days later).

addition rub the belly well with a flat hand if possible morning & evening for ten minutes & if either vomiting or purging should happen at any time in excess give laudanum both by the mouth & injection if necessary.

I forgot to tell you – Harriet^[327] has been confined on the 27th of a boy – they are doing well – you would hear of Captain Hardys^[328] death which is a severe blow to the poor girls. With kind regards to Mrs Craig and sincere wishes for the wellbeing of you all.

I remain
Yours Sincerely
Thomas Shortt

92. FROM [?] SMITH TO ALEXANDER CRAIG

19 Thistle Street, Edinburgh
4 March 1825^[329]

My dear friend

I have received your most distressing letter. Believe me when I assure you of my sincere & heartfelt sympathy for the great loss you have met with in being deprived of an amiable child the loss to you is severe indeed, but it is gain to her, and amidst your grief you have the soothing consolation in being assured she is now enjoying the fruits of a pure & spotless life, she is gone only a little while before us and God grant we may all be as ready to meet that inevitable [?doom] which awaits every human being. From the statement you gave when I last saw you of the dear invalids disorder I had flattered myself with the hopes of her ultimate recovery, but after the attack of the hooping cough it was not possible her weakened frame could bear up against the severe spasms accompan[y]ing the disease.

We pray God to support you under this heavy affliction & to spare you both for a comfort and protection for the blessings you have remaining & we trust & hope that in a few posts you will be able to give us favorable accounts of both Barbara and Agnes.

³²⁷ Not identified. As mentioned above, Dr Shortt's wife was named Henrietta.

³²⁸ Captain William Hardy (Note 247). He had died of fever at Seringapatam in 1824.

³²⁹ Postal markings show that the letter was posted from Edinburgh on 4 March 1825. It was addressed to 'Alexander Craig Esq. at Cally, Gatehouse'. The last two words have been struck through and the letter redirected to 'Cairnsmure', Newton Stewart.

My poor wife thanks you for your kind good wishes. I am sorry to say her malady continues without any abatement seldom a day passing without some paroxysms and never at any time altogether free from pain.

I had a letter on Tuesday from my Sister Jane informing me that Anne had been for a length of time and was still suffering under a stomach & bowel complaint which had reduced her much, this intelligence has the more distressed me as not only Mrs Smiths situation but my own health at present precludes the possibility of my going to see her. I have however written by a friend Colonel Douglas who promised to call upon them and to bring a particular account his return is expected tomorrow or next day. Mrs Smith unites with me in kind regards to Mrs Craig and yourself and pray God to bless & comfort you. I remain

My dear Sir
Yours truly & sincerely
[illegible]^[330] Smith

93. FROM MARY YOUNG TO ANN CRAIG

Harburn
4 March [1825]^[331]

My dear Mrs Craig,

I have just heard of the death of your dear & excellent Sophia & much very much I feel for you and her father. Poor lamb, her sufferings have been so great & lasted so long, that her release from this world must be felt as less a misfortune to herself than to her nearest to whom she was justly so dear, and might, had she been spared, have been so great a blessing to them. I cannot tell you what I feel for you all, and if I could it would avail nothing but I trust and hope you will not neglect your own health, for the sake of your dear husband, who has so much to suffer. I know well what he feels though no man speaks so little of his feelings. I dare not ask you to write to me. Yet if you will I shall be very grateful for a line to tell me how you and Mr Craig are and my dear Lillias & Agnes. Perhaps Lillias will write and tell me.

You know [a] change of air will soon be necessary for them and you would gratify me (& all this family) sincerely if you would bring them here and I

³³⁰ The initial or title is now illegible. Note, however, that Russell, 2007, 36, calls him 'Dr Smith'.

³³¹ No year was given but the letter bears a circular Edinburgh date stamp of 5 March 1825.

would stay with you and attend to the farm – and you should live just as you please without seeing anybody but myself. Mr Craig would then be at hand when he wished to see my Father. Is he not obliged to go to York soon – and will not you come before he sets out. Tell me you will my dear Mrs Craig & believe me ever

Your affectionate & sincere
M. Young

My Father & family are at present all in Edinburgh but I am here for a fortnight with my friend Miss Norton.

94. FROM GEORGE BUCHANAN TO ALEXANDER CRAIG

Kinross
17 March 1825

My dear friend

Ever since I received your last afflicting letter I have been in a constant toss of mind and body and even at this moment am so occupied and fretted with occurrences equally unexpected and vexatious as to be in a very unfit frame to sympathise with Mrs Craig and yourself or to offer you that consolation under your late most melancholy bereavement, of which both of you stand so eminently in need.

You have indeed, had taken away from you one of the most amiable and interesting of children a parent was ever blessed with. In my own part I can solemnly declare there never was one of her age, to whom although I had not been half a day in her company I felt so powerfully attached. What then must Mrs Craig's feelings and your own be, who have watched over her from her tenderest infancy, and who have witnessed the child of so much pleasing hope and [*illegible*] under every variety of health and sickness – one while flattering yourselves that all [*interlined: that was*] so attractive and fascinating in her appearance and dispositions would every revolving year become still more attractive and fascinating – and then, under the severe and protracted sufferings of the patient and submissive victim looking to her dissolution as an event to be expected and even wished for – and again, [*interlined: finding her*] restored as by miracle to a picture of health and vigour which you had considered absolutely unattainable.

I feel peculiarly and most deeply affected by the circumstance you mention, in proof of the place I held in poor dear Sophia's remembrance and regard –

and I shall ever think of her with those tender and hallowed emotions inseparable from impressions which all I have seen or heard of her cannot fail to produce.

I very much doubt, whether, notwithstanding my sacred profession and the lessons I am called on to inculcate in others, I should, if placed in your situation, have been able to feel so much like an affectionate Father and at the same time to bear up so much like the true Xtian [*i.e.* Christian].

I have only to impress my earnest prayer that if indeed one of the strongest of the links that bound you to a present world has been snapt it will be the means of [?reve]lling that ever-during link which shall connect you with a better, I trust the hopes & prospects of the Gospel will bring far more than the lenient hand of time bring relief and comfort to Mrs C's and your own now agitated bosoms – and that through Him who is the resurrection & the life your hearts will be more & more laid open to the hope of a re-union with your prematurely-separated child in that blessed country where all those qualities and affections that are the merited objects of our admiration, delight and complacency are to their possessors & ever will be their unspeakable happiness and glory.

My mother who continues to [?experience] & [?exhibit] the growing infirmities & helpless[ness] of her advanced period of life & my sister who is much in her usual health unite in the most affectionate condolence. I beg my kind love to Mrs C, Liliias – whom I expect to see ere long – and Agnes.

Believe me my dear friend
your affectionate Cousin
GCD Buchanan^[332]

³³² Alexander Craig's cousin the Reverend George Craig Dalziel Buchanan (c.1775-1842), minister of Kinross from 1804 to 1842. He was the son of James Craig (1739-1795), the architect of much of the New Town of Edinburgh.

APPENDIX A

Amongst the papers of the Craig family of Syllodioch held by the Stewartry Museum are some pages that appear to belong to a now lost journal written by Alexander Craig. The following transcript and explanatory notes are by Peter Didsbury.

[...] day week in the gig; when the clock struck ten she remarked how rapidly the evening had passed, it seemed hardly ten minutes – begged her Mother to attend Lillias who had taken Ipecacuanha to ease the paroxysms of the Hooping Cough. (Pulled her this forenoon the first blown daffodil.) Sophia lay till near 12 without turning when her Mother suggested that she had perhaps remained too long on one side, but she begged her to wait a little. Soon after 12 on the morning of the 28th of February her mother & Mary proceeded to turn her in bed when she expired without a struggle or a groan, she made only a very few respirations after I came from the nursery where I had lain down on the bed beside her sister Lillias. Sophia was born 17 December 1808. consequently she lived 16 years 2 months & 11 days.

Thus vanished all the airy dreams I had indulged in relation to the earthly happiness of my darling child, but I trust with the utmost hope & confidence, that through the atonement of a Saviour the change has been for her great advantage, & that she has exchanged a state of bodily suffering (which during the last 18 months of her existence she bore with the greatest fortitude & resignation) for a life of eternal happiness, & that the survivors have only to deplore her loss – O. that this sad bereavement may make a suitable & lasting impression on our minds.

Surely no parents were ever blessed with a more dutiful & affectionate child than Sophia; from infancy she promptly complied with all our desires, so that we never once had occasion either to find fault with or to correct her, she had the sweetest temper & most amiable dispositions that ever human being possessed; Her judgement was always remarkable for her years, & the acquirements for which she was distinguished among her schoolfellows were only exceeded by her great humility; to the vivacity of youth she joined the sedateness of old age; no baleful passion ever found shelter in her bosom, on the contrary she was always anxious to minister to the happiness of all around her, cheerfully giving up her own plans to gratify the wishes & desires of others. Piety seemed an innate feeling in her bosom; from infancy her mind was strongly impressed with the truths of religion, by which her conduct through her short life was always regulated, & it helped greatly to support her during her severe illness & robbed Death of all his terrors. A few hours before her death

she expressed great delight at the comfort & promises contained in the 15. Chapter of 1. Corinthians^[1] which her mother read to her & rejoiced in the hope & expectation of a blessed resurrection. Oh that we may all pass through the dark valley with the same calmness and resignation that she did & meet together again in mansions of everlasting bliss.

Alex Craig

My darling children were measured by me at the dates undermentioned, & were then of the several heights as follows.^[2]

	Sophia 17 Dec. 1808	Lilias 26 July 1810	William 11 Oct. 1814	Agnes 29 May 1816
1813 Oct.	3.5 ½	3. ¾	-	
1814 Oct.	3.8 ¾	3.3 ¼	-	
1815 Oct.	3.9 ¾	3.5 ¾	2.4 ½	
			Died 16 Nov.	
1816 Oct.	3.11 ¾	3.7 ¾		
1817 Oct.	4.1 ½	3.9 ½		
1818 Oct.	4.3 ½	3.11		
1819 Oct.	4.5 ½	4.1 ½		3.
1820 July	4.7 ¾	4.2 ¼		3.1 ¼
1821 July	4.9 ¾	4.3 ½		3.4
1822 July	4.11 ½	4.5 ¼		3.6 ¾
1823 July	5.0 ½	4.6 ½		3.8 ¼
1825 Feb.	5.2	“ “		“ “
	Died 28 Feb.			
1825 July		4.11		3.11 ½
1826 July		4.11 ¾		4.1 ½
1827 Sept.		5. ¾		4.3 ½
1828 April		“ “		4.4 ¾
1829 April		5.1 ¼		4.7 ¼
1830 April		5.1 ½		4.9 ¼
1831 Oct.				4.10
1832 Aug.				4.10 ½

Sophia Craig was buried in the church yard of Girthon in the same grave with her brothers John and William on Thursday the 3rd of March 1825. The following persons attended.^[3]

The Revd Henry Duncan
----- David Wilson
----- Robert Jeffrey
----- James Gordon
----- Thomas Turnbull
James Stewart
Capt. McKerlie
[?C. N. D. Thomson]
David McCulloch
A. I. Stewart
Dr Kennedy
Thomas Martin
Thomas Sproat
Alexander Brown
Anthony Heron
Anthony Harper
Andrew Kirk
Chas McKeand
John McWhea
Alexander McClure
William Ramage
James Neal
Hugh M'Conochie
Mr [?McNish]
John McWilliam

The following did not attend.^[4]

William McKeand
Col. Maxwell
Robert McNish
James Kirkpatrick
James Kirkpatrick Jr
Dr Watson
John Nish
James Credie
John Moore
Samuel McMillan
Dr Rae

Notes

- ¹ The chapter deals with Christ's victory over death, and faith in the resurrection of the dead.
- ² The heights are in feet and inches.
- ³ The first five names on the list of attendees are those of ministers of the Established Church. Henry Duncan, David Wilson, Robert Jeffrey, James Gordon, and Thomas Turnbull were the ministers of Ruthwell, Stranraer, Girthon, Borgue, and Anwoth, respectively. Both Duncan and Wilson were relatives of Sophia Craig. A number of other attendees were either relatives or can be traced with some confidence either from the Gatehouse section of *Pigot's Directory* for 1825-1826 or from memorial transcriptions from Girthon Old Kirkyard. They are:

James Stewart	the Uncle James of the letters.
Capt. McKerlie	John McKerlie, the husband of Aunt Harriet, before his promotion to rear-admiral.
David McCulloch	gentry, Knockbrev, Borgue.
A. I. Stewart	probably Alexander James Stewart, gentry, Gategill, Borgue.
Dr Kennedy	Charles Kennedy, surgeon, Front Street, Gatehouse.
Andrew Kirk	cabinet maker, Nelson Street, Gatehouse.
Charles McKeand	postmaster, Front Street, Gatehouse.
James McWhea	grocer and spirit dealer, Front Street, Gatehouse.
Alexander McClure	tenant farmer, Girthon.
William Ramage	ship owner, Cally Garden, Gatehouse.
Mr McNish	several of this name in Gatehouse at the time.
John McWilliam	boot and shoemaker, Front Street, Gatehouse.

No exhaustive search has been undertaken in respect of the other names on the list of attendees.

- ⁴ The reasons why Alexander Craig kept this part of the list are unknown. They are presumably the names of those who might have been expected, or had been invited, to attend. Given the continuing legal dispute between Craig and his former employer Alexander Murray, there may have been some who thought it politic to stay away. In the case of William McKeand, age, ill-health or infirmity may have kept him from travelling from Wigtownshire. He was to die aged eighty-three the following year. Some of the others can be identified using the same sources as above. They are:

William McKeand	possibly the husband of Ann Craig's sister Jane.
Colonel Maxwell	David Maxwell, gentry, Cardoness, Anwoth.
Robert McNish	linen and woollen draper, Front Street, Gatehouse.
James Kirkpatrick	linen and woollen draper, Front Street, Gatehouse.
James Kirkpatrick Jr	presumably the son of the above.
Dr Watson	James Watson, surgeon and druggist, Front Street, Gatehouse.
John Nish	possibly the person of the same name buried in Girthon Old Kirkyard, who died in 1838 and was described on his headstone as 'A true philanthropist'.
James Credie	provost, nursery and seedsman, Front Street, Gatehouse.
John Moore	possibly John Moor, linen and woollen draper, Front Street, Gatehouse.
Samuel McMillan	possibly of McMillan & Son, grocer, Front Street, Gatehouse.
Dr Rae	Nelson Rae, burgh councillor, surgeon, Front Street, Gatehouse.

APPENDIX B

The following sketch and accompanying transcribed note come from the papers of the Craig family of Syllodioch held by the Stewartry Museum. It has been proposed that the sketch shows Syllodioch House (Russell, 2007, 31). A modern hand has added the date 26/8/24.



This is the last sketch my darling Sophia ever drew – shortly thereafter she went to Ruthwell where she staid a month & then to Edinburgh in search of that first of earthly blessings ~~of~~ Health, but the possession of which was alas with held from her; O that it had pleased the Almighty to have spared her to be a comfort & blessing to her family & friends, but thy will O God not mine be done.

Alex Craig

APPENDIX C

An article in *The Gallovidian*¹ throws extra light upon Alexander Craig's interests and incidentally confirms the existence of a diary, now lost. An antiquary, William Scott of Rockcliffe, submitted to the journal a copy of some papers which had apparently been found among Alexander's effects after his death. They concern an account of how Craig, when dining with the Stewarts of Gategill in c.1830, had been told the story of 'Dirk Hatterick's Tumbler'. Their ancestor Hugh Stewart of Gategill had, as an officer of the Marines in the mid 1780s, been charged with putting down smuggling activities in the Bay of Luce, to which end he was given command of a rowing boat and twelve seamen.

According to the story, Hugh was well acquainted with a notorious smuggler named Yawkins, who was later to be immortalised by Sir Walter Scott under the name of Guy Mannering. An occasion arose when a strong wind blowing off the land prevented Yawkins from landing to pick up his cargo while at the same time Stewart was unable to tackle his superior force. Yawkins had gone ashore to purchase a bullock and invited Stewart to go aboard his vessel and dine. The invitation was refused but in the event a truce was reached, a sail was spread on the shore and 'a great many people sat down'.

While the feast was being prepared, Stewart happened to admire a handsome fowling piece, which Yawkins had brought ashore to shoot the bullock. Yawkins insisted upon his accepting it as a gift, and when the feast was over jokingly observed that since Stewart had got the fowling piece he might as well take the bottles and glasses as well.

After this story was told in Craig's presence, one of the Stewarts recalled seeing the tumblers in question and fetched them out from 'an old china press'. Craig then suggested that Sir Walter Scott might find one of them an acceptable present and some time later Mr A. J. Stewart gave Craig one of the tumblers to convey to Sir Walter, only requesting in return a note acknowledging receipt so that he could preserve Sir Walter's autograph along with the remaining glass.

The ever-scrupulous Craig penned this account on 1 February 1831, vouching for the authenticity of the particulars related. William Scott thought it probable that the document was probably a duplicate of an account submitted along with the tumbler when taken to Abbotsford. An extract from Craig's diary, presumably also found among his posthumous papers but the whereabouts of which are unknown, was also reproduced:

August 30th, 1831

Went to Abbotsford and delivered Dirk Hatterick's tumbler to Sir Walter Scott.

Unfortunately, there are no dated entries in Sir Walter Scott's own journal between late May and early October of 1831, a period during which the author was very ill, so there is no record of what he thought of the gift. It would be interesting to know if the tumbler and any accompanying document are still extant at Abbotsford.

Note

¹ *The Gallovidian*, 5.2 (1900), 36-37. Thanks are due to Dr David Devereux for letting me know of this article.

FURTHER READING

Most of the original letters are held at the Stewartry Museum, Kirkcudbright (MDA code KIRKU), with accession nos 1991/28/1-88 and 2012/24/1-2. Three other letters are in a private collection in Australia.

A useful and very detailed account of Alexander Craig's activities as factor, as well as details of the wider family and his daughters' wills, may be found in Russell, J E. Syllodioch and the Craig family, *Scottish Genealogist*, 54.1 (2007), 23-43.

The development of Gatehouse of Fleet and its industries is covered in the following three works: Devereux, D and Keating, H, eds. *Gatehouse of Fleet in the Past*, Gatehouse of Fleet, 1995; Mann, P. *The Gatehouse Experiment: the Story of a Lost Industrial Era*, Cambridge, 1985; and Steel, D. *The Gatehouse Adventure: the Early History of Gatehouse of Fleet*, Gatehouse of Fleet, 2011. For an account with more specific reference to the Murrays' Broughton estate, see Coombey, N. *Cally Story: the Development of the Parks and Pleasure Grounds of Cally by the Murray Family*, Gatehouse of Fleet, 2007. The standard work on the families and properties of this part of Scotland is McKerlie, P H. *A History of the Lands and their Owners in Galloway*, 5 vols, Edinburgh, 1870-1879 (for the parish of Girthon, see vol. III, 475-500).

The most up-to-date account of the Duncan relations at Ruthwell is Munn, C W. *Minister of Money: Henry Duncan, Founder of the Savings Bank Movement*, Edinburgh, 2017.

An invaluable and highly readable description of contemporary travel through the landscapes mentioned in the letters may be found in Macloud, I. *Sailing on Horseback: William Daniell and Richard Ayton in Cumbria and Dumfries and Galloway*, Dumfries, 1988. Daniell's aquatints show such places as Cardoness Castle, Kirkcudbright and Whitehaven very much as the Craig girls must have known them. Further on the theme of travel, the routes taken by these letters, as well as by the Craigs themselves, may be gathered from Haldane, A R B. *Three Centuries of Scottish Posts*, Edinburgh, 1971.

Aspects of the educational climate in Galloway at the time are dealt with in Hunter, J. *Alexander Murray: Galloway's Self-Taught Genius*, Stranraer, 2014 and Gray, A. *Borgue Academy: the Story of a Village School*, Borgue, 1989. References to the Dowlings' establishment are scattered through the corpus of Wordsworthian literature and aspects of it are described in Waldegrave, K. *The Poets' Daughters: Dora Wordsworth and Sara Coleridge*, London, 2013.

Finally, two websites of relevant interest are Eunice and Ron Shanahan's postal history [website](#), and the Gatehouse Folk [website](#). The latter is a growing treasure house of information on all aspects of Gatehouse and its history.

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